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RICHARD N. SPEAIGHT.

LADY LURGAN AND HER SON.

178, Regent Street.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Our Portrait Illustration: Lady Lurgan and her Son ...	925, 926
Signs of the Times ...	926
Country Notes...	927
Swiss Country Life. (Illustrated) ...	929
Mr. Swinburne and his Poetry ...	932
From the Farms. (Illustrated) ...	933
A New Fishing Book. (Illustrated) ...	934
On the Banks of a River. (Illustrated) ...	936
Sport in Alaska ...	939
A Corner in Sussex. (Illustrated) ...	940
In the Garden. (Illustrated) ...	941
Country Home: Honington Hall. (Illustrated) ...	942
The Wine of the Country ...	952
Ascot Week. (Illustrated) ...	953
Wild Country Life ...	955
The Ornithologist in Denmark.—II. (Illustrated) ...	956
First Impressions of the Show. (Illustrated) ...	958
Avine Watch-dogs ...	959
Correspondence...	959

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

WE do not in this journal favour the interview much as a means either of obtaining news or of writing an article, but for once there is a public man in England whom we should like to see subjected to a series of interrogations. This is Mr. Austen Chamberlain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He said the other night, and everybody was glad to have the assurance from him, that business is taking a more hopeful turn, and that we may expect it to be much better in England shortly. This is good news, and it is from no unfriendly motive that we should like to have a few questions answered in regard to it. We suppose no one is really in a better position to form an opinion on this subject than the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose finger is, as it were, on the nation's pulse as far as finance is concerned. There are times when no doubt is possible. When Sir Michael Hicks Beach was in the place now occupied by Mr. Chamberlain there were halcyon days, or rather Budget nights, when he had to announce that the return from the taxes had exceeded all computation. That was proof positive of prosperity. There have been Chancellors of the Exchequer, however, who have had an opposite tale to tell, and among them is to be numbered the newest occupant of the post. According to the test applied from Downing Street, Great Britain was not doing well last year, and if the tide is turning now the movement is not perceptible to outsiders. No

doubt our imports have been increasing, and there are economists who hold that an increased capacity for consuming food is as certain a sign of national well-being as it is of individual health. We do not profess to follow out the line of reasoning, but it is frequently adopted. In fact, our consumption of food of every kind is continually on the increase; each household, on the average, seems to pay more to its butcher and its baker, its poulterer and its fishmonger. Mr. Austen Chamberlain has noted that, and he reproduced a contention that we advanced in COUNTRY LIFE some weeks ago. The expenditure of the average citizen increases, and so does the expenditure of the State, but the query remains whether the outlay is a consequence of our increased wants or of our increased means. Until that is decided the argument from imported meat must remain doubtful.

A fact that tells in favour of the opposite side of the argument is that the unemployed are increasing in number, which seems to confirm the idea that business must be in a languishing condition. Still, this is not final either. We have to interpret it by means of a theory which, for lack of a better title, we may call that of the spent wave. When business is not flourishing the demand upon labour naturally contracts; but when the turn of the tide is reached the cessation of this contracting movement does not follow immediately. In other words, if in the conduct of a great commercial enterprise it has been found necessary, owing to bad times, to dismiss a large proportion of the hands, these workmen are not rehired at the very moment when those who are at the head of affairs see a light which they consider the dawn of better times. They wait until their first hopes have been confirmed and promise has been gratified by performance. No one engages labour till he has something for the men to do; so that it is quite possible that Mr. Austen Chamberlain may be right in his diagnosis, in spite of the figures issued by the Board of Trade. Still, by no ingenuity can those figures be used to support his statement.

There is a final symptom which we expect his conclusion is based on, and that is the payment of taxation. The permanent officials at the Treasury are, no doubt, able to define the currents of prosperity or decline with more precision than anyone else. When a downward movement has been taking place for some time, there must come a moment at which its lowest point is reached. If that should have come, then the hopes expressed by Mr. Chamberlain are in a fair way to be fulfilled. But looking abroad, it is difficult to avoid a certain pessimism. In the end a great war may clear the air, and even be of advantage to those engaged in it, but its immediate effect must be bad for trade. Political economists used to hold forth about productive and unproductive capital. They argued that if a man spent his money in a luxury, such as champagne, of which he stood in no need, that was an economical loss to the country, whereas if he bought shares in some industrial enterprise, such as bootmaking, with the money it was an addition to our productive capital. Now we can scarcely imagine anyone questioning to what category would belong the money expended in munitions of war. To take a homely illustration: If a man were to blaze away £100 worth of fireworks, he would have parted with his money for absolutely nothing, and been to that extent impoverished. But in modern warfare a nation does not let off its fireworks by the hundred pounds, but by the million pounds, worth. Moreover, if it wishes to hold its place to the bottom of the sea has to be replaced by another. New cannon have to be found for those which were captured by the enemy. If the country is not in a position to do this, what happens is that it pays an indemnity to the other country because it has been beaten. So that, in any way you take it, modern warfare is an enormous mechanism for weakening or even exhausting the resources of a country. We have felt that even in South Africa, where a rich country, with a soil capable of bearing all manner of good and useful crops, with mines in which are stored immense quantities of gold and precious stones, awaits development simply because it is still in that state of weakness which follows a prolonged war. If we reason from that analogy, therefore, we must arrive at the conclusion that, although the contest between Japan and Russia may in the end open the gates of the East wider than ever they have been before to European enterprise, the first effect will be a deadly depression of trade. It is a somewhat pessimistic view to take in the teeth of Mr. Chamberlain's assurance, and it would only make one happy to think that his prognostication is true.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Baroness Lurgan with her son. Lady Lurgan is the elder daughter of Earl Cadogan, and was married to Baron Lurgan in 1893.



THE history of the war during the last few days has been full of stirring incident, but the most interesting of all questions asked in regard to it is what is going to be the end. One of the most plausible rumours we have heard runs as follows: As soon as the Japanese have reduced Port Arthur and inflicted a decisive beating on General Kuropatkin, they intend to appeal to the European Powers to end the war. The contention, of course, is that this will complete the object they had in view in commencing hostilities, and that they have nothing to gain by carrying the contest further. In an ordinary case the victorious army pushes on to the capital of its adversary and there dictates terms. It would be unfair to say that Japan could not do this, because hitherto she has accomplished all that she has attempted, but it would mean a frightful expenditure not only of money, but of life, and there are a thousand reasons why the war should be brought to a conclusion as soon as Port Arthur has been captured and the Russians have been turned out of Manchuria.

But the difficulty in the way of this is almost too obvious to need exposition. We may take it for granted that all the European Powers, even those most friendly to Russia, would at heart sympathise with the appeal. The commercial interests of no European Power are to be served by the establishment of Russia in Manchuria, with all the advantages to trade that it carries. In fact, there can be no doubt that if Japan made such an appeal she would command general sympathy. But the difficulty lies in Russia herself. From a purely materialistic calculation it is evident that the sooner she brings this war to a conclusion the better for herself. It is both disastrous and expensive. It was begun without adequate preparation, and, as far as we can discover at the moment, there is nothing to show the existence of even a chance that the issue may be triumphant. On the other hand, it would be a humiliation beyond any that has ever been inflicted on a civilised Power for a European country to have to capitulate to Asiatics. The loss of prestige would be so great that we can hardly imagine a proud nation like Russia submitting to it. In the case of her refusal, a situation of great difficulty arises. We do not for one moment imagine that the European Powers would combine to enforce their decision by force of arms; and unless they did that the appeal of the Japanese is bound to be in vain. Hence the anxiety that is being generally felt at the present moment.

In the strictly non-political speech which Mr. Austen Chamberlain made to the City Fathers when invited to meet them at dinner by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, there was much "to give to think," as the French say. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is fully aware of the growing expenditure of the country, but apparently there is no way in which it can be checked. On the contrary, his idea is that the national expectations from Government have increased so much that the expenditure is more likely to grow than to diminish. He lamented that his lot had not been cast in those years of plenty when taxes yielded more than was expected from them, but rather in a lean year, when everything fell short of what should have come from it. On the other hand, Mr. Austen Chamberlain is not without hope. He thinks that signs are visible of a better time than that through which we are passing. He seems to be disappointed that more activity has not been manifested in South Africa, and on this point his impatience is very generally shared, but it is not quite reasonable. History tells us of no instance in which a country recovered immediately after a great war. In the end no doubt South Africa will be all the better for the long campaign in which Mr. Kruger was worsted, but it is useless to try and reap the harvest before it has ripened.

At the meeting of the Agricultural Organisation Society there was a certain lack of definite statement. We all know,

without it being repeated, that much is being done in the way of combining for the purchase of foodstuffs and artificial manures. We are also aware that the Agricultural Credit Bank is an admirable institution, but beyond that we should like to have some more positive statement than was vouchsafed by Lord Onslow. He says that the prosperity of English agriculture, and especially of the small holders, is wrapped up in the progress of the co-operative movement. Well, in the first place, comparatively speaking, the number of small holders in England is few, and, in the second place, the conditions are very different to those that obtain on the Continent. We should like to know if Lord Onslow really thinks that co-operation might be usefully applied, for instance, to dairy farming, and, if so, how? It has often been shown in our columns that the co-operative production of butter and cheese would mean a dead loss to our agriculturists, and in what manner beyond those specified co-operation could be applied we are at a loss to determine, nor is any help to be obtained from the vague generalities indulged in at the meeting.

MATER DOLOROSA.

Fair and most fair!
With the Child on thy knee,
Look down on me,
And my despair!
Oh, empty arms! Oh, aching smart!
The little feet pass over my heart.

Star of the sea!
I can see him stand
On the shining sand,
And shout his glee.
And to and fro, as the swallows dart,
The little feet pass over my heart.

Mother of God!
The nights grow chill—
I can hear them still
Down the frozen road;
On the air they rise, and they fall and start,
The little feet pass over my heart.

"Oh! dark despair,
He comes to thee,
The Child from my knee,
Fair and Most Fair.
He shall fill thine arms, He shall heal thy smart,
His pierced feet shall rest on thy heart."

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY.

If the reorganisation of the Meteorological Office is of importance to the general public, it is of especial interest to the agriculturist, and he will be the first to ask in what way, and to what extent, the forecasts issued by the Office are likely to be improved when the recommendations proposed by the Royal Commission, whose report has just been delivered to Parliament, are adopted. The change advocated which is likely to be of the greatest service both in the immediate and remote future, is that of the use of wireless telegraphic messages from the Atlantic, and it appears that one of the results of the Office's becoming a branch under the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries will be to render free a considerable sum which can be devoted to that object. Perhaps we shall have to wait a little time before ships can send messages to land while they are still a thousand or two miles out at sea; but, as it seems to have been recently proved that messages can be sent from land to ships at sea at that distance, we are probably not far from the time when the reverse will be accomplished.

The direct results of this departure would undoubtedly be a greater degree of accuracy in the forecasts issued daily for the ensuing twenty-four hours, and the issue of regular forecasts for a few days in advance, which, owing to the absence of all information from the Atlantic, has hitherto been quite impossible. The reasons for hoping for some such improvement are rather obvious. As nearly all the depressions which bring rain, and many of the anti-cyclones which bring dry weather, to this country arrive from the Atlantic, it is clear that if telegrams from that ocean were sufficiently frequent and numerous to permit the meteorologists to draw a chart daily, showing the winds, the temperature, and the barometric pressure, they would see what was to be expected in the near future—whether an anti-cyclone with its dry weather, or a series of depressions with rain, or rain and gales, were on their way to us.

In Sir John Ewart what we are accustomed to call a link with the past has been lost. For a long time, when a distinguished soldier died, the newspaper paragraphs used to relate that he had been at Waterloo. We do not think there are any now living who

were at that famous contest; but its position is being taken by the Crimea and the Indian Mutiny which followed it. In both of these General Sir John Ewart played a very distinguished part. He was a type of officer of whom England has reason to be proud. He had reached the ripe age of eighty-three, and is to be buried in the old Greyfriars Church at Stirling, the headquarters of his regiment.

Lord Kitchener's scheme for the location of the Indian Army marks a new era, and a recognition of an old truth. Ever since the Mutiny the theory governing the placing of the various armies of India, and the component parts of those armies, has been that the Indian Army existed to "hold" India as against another possible uprising of the native races. Though the population of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, then as since made less warlike and more friendly by the *Pax Britannica*, did not rise against us, the greater part of Central India, as well as of the Upper and Northern Ganges Valley, did. Hence the whole governing motive of army distribution has been so to arrange the troops that a native rising could be extinguished wherever it might occur. The native artillery in the Mutiny did us great damage. Since then, except a few Sikhs, no native regiment has ever been entrusted with a gun. The artillery are all English.

The abolition of the separate armies of Madras and Bombay was the first step to the change; but Lord Kitchener now proposes to alter absolutely (and with absolute common-sense) the whole theory hitherto guiding our military policy. It assumes, first, that India is loyal, and it leaves India as completely to civil control as England. Secondly, it recognises that the only danger to India is from Russia, and in this frank acceptance of facts it plants the whole mass of the Indian armies on the North-West Frontier, whence those masses can move as required and instantly to the mouths of the only two ways into the Madras Valley, the Khyber and the Bhotan Passes. The Staff College will be at Quetta, an extreme frontier post in Beloochistan. The business-like sense of the change will be obvious to all; but what has not yet been noticed in the Press is the immense gain to the health of the British Indian Army. Instead of sweltering amid the malaria and cholera in the plains or the Ganges Valley, the whole army will enjoy the healthy and bracing atmosphere of the north. The change will save tens of thousands of English lives in no great space of time.

It is curious, considering the general character of the weather last year and in the first half of the present year, that from several places in the South of England we have reports of an unusually large number of snakes, both of the harmless grass species and also of the adder—the latter, by the by, much more dangerous with its poisoned bite than the ordinary Englishman, who prides himself on living in a land free from venomous reptiles, is apt to suppose. Snakes as a rule are lovers of warmth and dry places (although the grass snake will take freely to water on occasion, and is a rapid swimmer), and last year was not such a dry one, nor has the present summer, so far, been such a warm one, that we should expect the serpent kind to have received much encouragement. None the less, it is evident that they are more abundant than usual.

At last it has been definitely declared that there is no intention on the part of any of the authorities to kill or molest in any way the City pigeons. We are glad to hear it. Those birds flying about such buildings as St. Paul's, the British Museum, and the Temple give a feeling of homeliness to these places that it would be a pity to lose, besides being in themselves pretty and interesting. It always seems to us very strange that the wood-pigeons, which are so shy in the rural districts, should voluntarily have taken up their residence in town. Their cooing, so different from that of the ordinary pigeon, is very pleasing to listen to, and their nests are placed so near the houses that their domestic manoeuvres can be observed with much greater comfort and accuracy than is possible in the country. Wild life in London is, in fact, a subject of enthralling and exceptional interest. During the present season it would have been quite possible to take strangers on a birds'-nesting expedition through the London parks and open spaces that would have surprised all but the few who keep a watchful eye on bird life in the metropolis.

The moment when these notes are passing through the press is, perhaps, the most critical of all the year for the hay crop. Regarded as grass, it is so heavy that we do not remember a better. It is, to say the least, quite equal to last year's crop, and to say that is to say a great deal. Whether as hay it will equal last year's produce depends on the weather of these few days, over the great part of England south of the Trent. And now we begin to hear again from the farmer the grumble that used to be familiar before the series of dry years came, but which we had almost forgotten, that "hay is so cheap it hardly pays

for the making." With the increase in the rate of wages, this comes more near the truth than it used to be.

In regard to pictures more than in regard to anything else is the adage true that tastes differ, but, at the same time, it must be said that the taste of our Royal Academy is, to say the least of it, peculiar. The paintings favoured by this body very often do not commend themselves to the liking of people of discrimination, while on the walls of Burlington House one very often sees canvases displayed that private purchasers would not care to have. All this has often enough been the subject of comment, but it acquires new point from an incident that happened a few days ago. A picture painted by Mr. T. Robertson was rejected by the Hanging Committee of the Royal Academy, but it was subsequently shown in the Salon at Paris, and has received the very great honour of being purchased by the French Government, which does not buy pictures on the principles exemplified in the bestowal of the Chantrey Bequest. We do not cite this one instance as being condemnatory of the Royal Academy, but it goes a long way to confirm the views commonly expressed about it.

THE PSHIPOLNITZA (THE NOON REAPER).

I saw the Pshipolnitza at midday in the corn,
The brightness of her beauty went through me like a thorn,
And for my overthrowing
Her long black tresses flowing
Were set with crimson coral in a comb of yellow horn.
Who sees the Pshipolnitza first will rue it all his life,
For never will he fall asleep beside a kindly wife,
His portion shall be sorrow,
The night's desire for morrow,
The moth's delight in burning, the pike's delight in strife.
Who meets the Pshipolnitza, and would be safe and sain,
Must go and walk beside her among the blowing grain,
And all her speeches answer
With No, like some churl-dancer,
Who mars his comrades' measure and breaks their ring in twain.
I saw the Pshipolnitza and could not be so wise,
For I saw the smile upon her mouth, the darkness in her eyes;
So the day for me is darkened,
Because one day I hearkened
The voice of an immortal and could not find replies.

NORA CHESSON.

The criticism, just published, by Dr. Sven Hedin of the British action in Thibet cannot fail to be of interest, even though its arguments are open to easy refutation. The distinguished traveller entirely ignores the fact that the expedition is not of our choice, but forced on us by the coquetting of the Thibetan Government with Russia. With all that Dr. Hedin says about the charm of the aloof position which the Thibetan Grand Lama has chosen to maintain, we may all be in sympathy. To one question that he asks we may reply with another. What gain, he enquires, will the British expedition have achieved if, after it has entered Lhasa, the Lama decides to set up his sacred power in some other sanctuary? Where else, we may well ask, on this now well-known globe, is there to be found another spot that has the traditions and the remoteness to qualify it for selection as this imaginary second Lhasa?

Among the incidental pieces of intelligence on the fringe of the story of the appalling disaster to the New York excursion steamer, is the report of the coroner on the body of one of the victims that was found with the outside cover of a cork jacket, but nothing (nothing of life-saving, supporting, value) within the cover. The pretended cork was of pulverised cork morsels stuck together with glue, which dissolved on contact with the water. There is a terrible irony about this, that is equalled only by the callousness of the knave who could manufacture such a thing with the knowledge that it was to be sold as a life-preserving appliance. Possibly the case is less evil than it seems. Possibly the jacket would have held together for a certain length of time, during which help might have arrived. But even at the best the case is evil enough, and may serve as a warning for those who use cork jackets to see that they are made of cork.

The failure to run the Brighton Aquarium as a municipal music-hall may perhaps suggest that it might pay better to make it a really first-rate marine aquarium. At New York the city handed over to the Zoological Society a disused fort, nearly circular, with very thick walls and casemates, on the shore of New York Bay. The ground near had been turned into an esplanade, and was a favourite promenade, and the fort was large, rather like the smallest of those in the roadstead off Spithead. By putting some fifty big skylights in the roof, and converting the casemates into tanks filled with coral rock

and planted with seaweeds, the management turned it into a very serviceable aquarium, and have filled the tanks with a vast variety of the zoophytes and fishes of the Atlantic coast, both of temperate and tropical America. The thickness of the walls—some roft.—makes it impossible to get in sidelights as well. But the fishes are seen in surroundings sufficiently pretty and attractive to have induced no less than 1,500,000 people to visit the aquarium, or about two-thirds more than those who enter the doors of our much-appreciated Natural History Museum. Such a municipalised aquarium at Brighton, containing specimens of the small cetacea, seals, and sea-birds, as well as fishes and crustaceæ, would, at any rate, be instructive as well as amusing, even if it did not quite pay its way.

A contemporary gives an interesting list of the early forms of prizes for race-horses, long previous to the introduction of the thorough-bred. The earliest was the Continental "briglia d'or," or golden bridle. After this the prize in England was a bell. This pretty idea was taken from the custom among owners of pack-horses of decorating the best horse, which led the cavalcade, with a bell so that on dark nights and in dangerous places the whereabouts of the leader might be known, and the others follow boldly. At Carlisle, silver bells were

raced for by the moss troopers and dalesmen, and specimens of these bells are still retained in the Town Hall. They were presented by Lady Dacre, wife of Lord Dacre, at one time Governor of the Castle of Carlisle, and bear the inscription:

"He who rides this Bell to take
Must pray for Lady Dacre's sake."

There are also silver bells as "challenge cups," to use an Irishism, at Paisley and at Lanark.

That persons holding the King's Commission shall be able to write the "King's English" is the resolve of the authorities in charge of all Army examinations, and for that matter of all Civil Service examinations too. The examiners insist that every candidate shall be able to master the contents of a description, or of a series of letters, and report them briefly in his own words. As examples of "orders as they are wrote" at present, a correspondent of the *Spectator* quotes the following, "in the style of Joshua": "*Reveille* will be at 3.30 a.m. The brigade will parade at 4 a.m. The brigade will move at 4.15 a.m. *The sun will rise at 5 a.m.*" A second order ran: "No one is allowed to sleep outside the block-houses, except the sentry." The third is well-intentioned, but ambiguous also: "Men on outpost duty are forbidden to strike matches on the sky-line."

SWISS COUNTRY LIFE.

ONE of the most interesting things to do in passing through a foreign country is to observe to what extent the occupations of the country people resemble those of our own land, and how they differ from them. The beautiful and yet homely pictures that we show of peasant life in the Switzerland of to-day will suggest many thoughts to the English reader. Let us take, for example, the photograph of the man thrashing the flax. It reminds us of a crop that has almost ceased to be cultivated in England, although in our language there yet remain many traces of the time when flax was cultivated. There is a famous Scottish song called "Lassie wi' the lint-white locks," and we may be quite sure that "lint-white" would not have been used in this connection unless lint had been commonly grown. Again, there are places, such as the "Linthaugh," whose name has obviously been made on account of the crop most commonly cultivated there. The writer happens to know the place well, and also the old inhabitants; but not one of the rustics can

remember a time when flax was grown at the Linthaugh, and indeed the significance of the name has passed from their minds altogether.



But it ought not to have done so. Both in cottage and farmhouse there is still to be seen the linen that was grown on the home farm, prepared in the barn, and spun in the kitchen for the trousseaux of the grandmothers or great-grandmothers of the present generation. Very beautiful stuff it is, so much so as to make us regret that hand-made apparel has been to such an extent replaced by cheap machine-made clothes. In the few places where flax is still cultivated in England machinery now employed, so that the picture we reproduce would be quite impossible here. In Switzerland the flax is cut down when ripe and bound into bundles. It is then carried into the chalet close by, and there thrashed in the homely manner here depicted. The oil is extracted from the seed, and afterwards the flax is prepared and used at home in the making of garments, just as used to be the way in Great Britain, and particularly in the more northern part

F. Glazebrook.

THE EVENING HOUR.

Copyright

F. Glazebrook. *THRASHING THE FLAX.*

Copyright

of this island. Our next picture, "Making Milkpails," reminds us how different in Switzerland is the dairy industry to what it is in Great Britain. During the summer months the cows are kept in the higher Alps. The land is worked and owned by the canton, and the farmers send their cattle there and take it in turn, so many at a time, to attend to them for a fortnight. At the end of the season, each farmer receives so much per head of cattle for the milk, cheese, and butter sold. We may, therefore, assume that the milking capacities of the cows do not vary to

F. Glazebrook. *MAKING MILKPAILS.*

Copyright

the same extent as those of a British herd, otherwise it would be very hard to work the business in this communal style. One of the most pleasant sights in the Alps is to be witnessed in the evening, when the head-cowman, like Mary in Kingsley's poem, "calls the cattle home," not across the "sands of Dee," however, but down through the outlying Alps. About one hour after he has uttered his peculiar and piercing call hundreds of cattle come strolling in. This, too, is a sight that one need not go out of this island to see, because there are certain townships among the Cheviots where precisely the same thing occurs. If you happen to be staying there, and wake at a very early hour in the morning, you will hear someone blowing a horn, and at the sound the kine emerge from their byres and walk away to their hill pasture, following, in the place to which we refer particularly, a woman. At night this buxom dame comes out to the edge of the little mountain stream that tinkles past the village, and gives another such blast—such a blast as that which awakened the echoes of Fontarabian deserts when Roland blew his dread appeal—the cows come wandering down from the hills, and each departs to its own abode to be milked. The Alpine milk is carried in big wooden pails, which you see everywhere on the backs of the cowmen and boys. These pails are made by the cattlemen in their spare hours, and are used only for holding and



F. Glazebrook.

THE GLEANER.

Copyright

carrying milk. Our picture shows the head-cowman busily engaged at this work. In another picture we see these pails on the backs of the head-cowman and his two boys. In winter the cows are mostly fed on hay, and then every owner looks after his own small farm, where all due preparation has been made for the hard times coming. Our picture shows the hut ready to receive the small crop of hay. It is worth noticing that the great stones have been placed on the roof to prevent it being carried away by the winter's storms.

Nor are all the burdens placed on the backs of the male sex. For example, that baker's wife carries round the bread in a sort of hamper, and she has not a fixed, immutable charge, but chaffers for a price with the customers, as we can see her doing. The good old English word for this process was "cheaping," which in many places has been corrupted into chipping. Chipping Norton, for instance, being really Cheaping Norton, or the place where goods were cheapened, that is, sold by chaffer. Another peculiar example of feminine labour is afforded by our picture of "The Gleaner." At home the gleaner does not take any implement into the fields. As a rule she has only a tin bottle filled with cold tea and a little bag that holds the sandwiches of bacon and cheese that form her modest mid-day meal, which she eats under the shelter of the great hawthorn bushes or in the little

strip of wood that so often is situated close to the arable fields. In some places she carries nothing home except the heads of the corn, but in others, mindful of the needs of the pigs, she takes the straw too, which in due time will be utilised for bedding purposes. There is always something to us infinitely pathetic in the spectacle of a poor woman going forth to glean, or "gather," as they say in the North of England. It is symptomatic or typical of all that human toil which Tennyson has put into a phrase, describing how the Olympian Gods viewed the ill-used race of man, "storing yearly little dues of wheat and wine and oil." In the Alps the country-folk are very poor, and can afford to lose nothing, so that ere the reapers and gleaners have finished their work hardly a stalk of grain is left on the bare fields, and here the young mother may sing to her child:

"When I am old and weary and worn,
You shall go gleaning among the corn."

And our last picture shows that the fate of man does not change with his geographical distribution. Age steals upon the Alpine peasant as it does on the East Anglian shepherd and the Scottish hind. At eighty, which is the age of the old man shown, it is "too late a week" to begin hard work, and he is exhausted with carrying his basket from the river-bed below to his mountain home. He rests a little while now, and soon shall be where there is no more labour and no more tiredness.

Scenes like these, "reaper and gleaner and rough-ruddy labour," have ever had an intense fascination for those who most love Nature and country life. They furnished themes to Theocritus when seen in the world's morning splendour, and the "gray magician" saw them as clearly and painted them in tints as fresh after well nigh two thousand years had brought each its winter and its summer, its spring-time flowers and autumn leaves, alike to the Sicilian pastures, the English orchards and meadows, and the upland



F. Glazebrook.

HAY-TIME IS COMING.

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to his material advantage, perhaps, but certainly to the great loss of picturesque effect. His cottage, too, has been changed, and is mostly now after the ugly model laid down by the Local Government Board. So also the domestic outfit is changed. The open hearth has given place to a stove, and a hundred curious articles that used to be in the kitchen have become no more than stuff for the museum and the collector. And these changes are but emblematic of others that are none the less

grazings of Switzerland. The charm of the last mentioned consists in the fact that while elsewhere the old order has given place to the new, there it still endures. Here in England science has affected the surroundings of the meanest peasant. He has ceased to wear anything distinctive in dress. The antique smock has been discarded for a cheap Tweed suit, the wooden clogs for ready-made boots and shoes. In work he no longer uses the scythe that has so often been employed in poetic metaphor, the sickle and the flail, but he has become a mechanic—

significant because not material. Schools and cheap trips and commercial travellers have metamorphosed the very speech and mode of thinking, so that no one need set out now, as Burns did, to describe the loves, the ways of "simple" swains. But in the Grindelwald, where these pictures were taken, it will be seen that old fashions still continue. On the faces, and even on the figures, it will be seen that toil has placed his unmistakable handwriting. They are not laughing faces, but approximate rather to the sombre type so common in Scotland, a type that much has gone to fashion. It has grown out of unceasing labour and hard fare, for the bread of idleness is not eaten by such as these. But something of the simple piety of generations is expressed in it, too. Natural causes, such as the presence of forest and woodland, have also played their part. Mountaineers are naturally picturesque, as one may see by comparing the Scottish Highlander with his Lowland compatriot, and the Swiss ever have been renowned in this respect. Dwelling among these lofty and snow-capped



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THE BREAD-SELLER.

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MOUNTAIN CARRIERS.

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mountains, they, in the course of ages, have caught something from them, and it is discernible even in the aspect of these simple and honest country-folk. The very sight of them makes one wish to get away from the over-civilisation of towns, and long for the bracing air of the mountain-top and the coolness of the shadowy vale.

MR. SWINBURNE AND HIS POETRY.

WITH volume one, "Poems and Ballads," First Series, Messrs. Chatto and Windus have begun the publication of a complete edition of Mr. Swinburne's poems in six volumes. The most notable feature of the first instalment is a long essay on his own work, addressed by the poet to "my best and dearest friend," Mr. Watts-Dunton. It is, in many respects, a curious epistle that in the fitness of things might have been more appropriately addressed to a stranger than to the housemate with whom for years he has been in daily conversation. With the tone of it the present writer cannot profess to be much in sympathy. Mr. Swinburne has had thirty-six years of authorship, and he has "nothing to regret, and nothing to recant"; he finds nothing he would like "to cancel, to alter, or to unsay" in any paper he has ever laid before the reader. Life, and work, the greater part of life, are so crowded with regrets and errors, that one hears this sweeping statement with a feeling of dismay. At any rate, Mr. Swinburne has here succeeded in evading the Charybdis of what he calls "the cognate risks of vanity and humility." However, it is more important to hear what he has to say on other points than to press this one. He began life as a boy with a single-hearted worship of three "living gods" in the persons of Landor, Mazzini, and Hugo. Of recent years, Mr. Swinburne has lived in great seclusion, and probably does not realise how little these names are fit to conjure with to a generation that has become middle-aged since the sixties. Who except himself will at this time of day allude to Victor Hugo as the greatest of the French poets? Somehow, the set to which Mr. Swinburne belonged have receded from view, and gradually become figures more shadowy. Out of the once-famous pre-Raphaelite brotherhood no great painter came; out of the corresponding literary circle no writer of the first rank. Mr. Swinburne himself most deserves study for the influence he wielded. For two or three decades the Swinburnian young poet

was a feature of all the magazines. How often has this been imitated:

"The sea gives her shells to the shingle,
The earth gives her streams to the sea:
They are many, but my gift is single,
My verses, the first-fruits of me.
Let the wind take the green and the grey leaf,
Cast forth without fruit upon air;
Take rose-leaf and vine-leaf and bay-leaf
Blown loose from the hair."

Henleyism in its origin might be described as the fruit of his loins, the reproduction on a lower plane of the famous circle. For there was much to stir young blood in him. England had enjoyed a succession of very proper poets, Southey, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, and even William Morris, all coming under that description. An unflinching and austere morality strongly characterised some and influenced others. At the same time, the air reverberated with theological polemics. Christian apologists like Gladstone said one thing; evolutionists like Huxley and Tyndall and Spencer the exact opposite; and even when religious ideas are modified, there is a minority who would like to see the pendulum swing from Puritanism to licence. So when Mr. Swinburne, in obedience to the precept, "look in thy heart and write," found there the material out of which he fashioned "Laus Veneris" and the "Hymn of Proserpine," his words found many an echo. He was interpreting a mood of his day when, in the latter, he thus compared the Virgin Mary with Aphrodite:

"For thine came pale and a maiden, and sister to sorrow; but ours,
Her deep hair heavily laden with odour and colour of flowers,
White rose of the rose-white water, a silver splendour, a flame,
Bent down unto us that besought her, and earth grew sweet with her name.

For thine came weeping, a slave among slaves, and rejected; but she
Came flushed from the full-flushed wave, and imperial, her foot on the sea.
And the wonderful waters knew her, the winds and the viewless ways,
And the roses grew rosier, and bluer the sea-blue stream of the bays."

And since the Book of Job was written the sentiment in the strong concluding lines of this hymn has never failed to evoke a response:

"For the glass of the years is brittle wherein we gaze for a span;
A little soul for a little bears up this corpse which is man.
So long I endure, no longer; and laugh not again, neither weep,
For there is no God found stronger than death; and death is a sleep."

Again, the Radicalism and the Republicanism to which he gave expression in those days was in the air. Gladstone and Bright and Disraeli were in their prime, and Lord Salisbury was putting his withering sarcasm into the *Saturday Review*. Mr. Swinburne only reflected the spirit of an age in which Radicalism



F. Glazebrook.

WEARY AND WORN.

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was prepotent. A tide of Imperialism followed, and he mirrored it too. There was no need for him to insert a clause to the effect that his earlier political opinions were wholly consistent with those that followed. It is not for politics that one reads Mr. Swinburne. If one's memory be allowed to have done its proper work, and to have kept alive what is fine, and let oblivion fall on the rest, then we find the haunting and memorable passages in his work to consist not of the fiery politics or passion, but of such passages as the antiphonal lamentation for the dying Meleager in *Atalanta*, and certain choruses and lyrics. Nor is the main excellence the technical accomplishment displayed, though to that he attaches so much importance, but the directness and tenseness of the expression. See how brief and strong is the great chorus:

"Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of man,
Time with a gift of tears,
Grief with a glass that ran."

Though not so popular, the one in the early part of the poem has a peculiar charm:

"And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Moenad and the Bassarid.
And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The God pursuing the maiden hid."

This has less of the "bright infernal" than some of the passages that could be quoted.

Mr. Swinburne's remarks about drama force the critic into a somewhat ungracious attitude. Good wine needs no bush, and it is scarcely possible that an author could obtain any effective result when he attempts to instruct readers as to what they should admire. No one of any insight or knowledge will deny the wide knowledge or the unstinted labour bestowed on Bothwell or Queen Mary, but, though the materials are there, they are not fired by the dramatic spirit. It would take long to argue the matter out, but the conclusion is inevitable. Let his own adjectives, "ambitious, conscientious, and comprehensive," be accepted, and yet a work may be all that, and still not a fine dramatic poem.

The most pertinent paragraphs in the essay are those referring to the use of the title "Ode." After a number of sound remarks, he goes on to say that by the test of the poems of Athens and the Armada:

"I am content that my claims should be decided and my station determined as a lyric poet in the higher sense of the term; a craftsman in the most ambitious line of his art that ever aroused or ever can arouse the emulous aspiration of his kind."

This deliverance of Mr. Swinburne on his own poems is altogether so unusual, yet so characteristic, that every admirer is almost bound to obtain and read it.

FROM THE FARMS.

PIGSTIES.
A VERY useful little article on the construction of pigsties appears in the June number of the *Journal of the Board of Agriculture*. No other of the outhouses is so systematically neglected as the dwelling of the pig, and the consequences are often serious, not only to the owner, but to his neighbour. If an animal is kept under filthy conditions, it stands to reason that it will become more liable to disease, and therefore more of a centre of infection than if it were cleanly kept. Poor people often fail to get the full benefit of their pigs because the creatures develop lung complaints, rheumatism, and other ills incidental to draughts and moisture. The first thing that should be attended to in making a pigsty is the floor, which should be constructed of some hard substance wherein the pig cannot root. It should have no holes where water can collect in puddles. The best material is concrete or Portland cement, though the writer says that a useful flooring can also be made with a mixture of tar and gravel stamped and rammed into a solid block. He does not recommend bricks, unless they are new and unbroken, and laid in cement at least 6in. deep. Even then they are liable to chip and crack. Stone flags are bad, as they let the manure sink in between the joints, and so develop impurity underneath, while wooden floors, unless movable, are utterly condemned. Concrete, therefore, is the best substance, and every workman should be able to prepare it for himself. It should be laid with a gentle slope towards the front of the sty, and it is advisable to make the top of the outer court lower than the bottom of the slope of the inner court by about 2in. This leaves a step between the two courts, and enables the drainage water to fall with a rush and run away rapidly. Keeping in mind that dryness under foot is an important object to be obtained, small channels should be made in the cement before it hardens. This very proper warning concludes the directions as to the floor: "The slope of the floor should not be so great as to make it slippery, lest the pigs, on running out to their food, should hurt themselves; and for the same reason the surface of the cement between the channels should be left slightly rough." For the walls, bricks or stones are recommended, and they should not be built so high as to shut out the light and air from the swine. A high roof is recommended, but the material is not of much consequence. Tiles, slates, or thatch do equally well. These directions, of



CARTING HAY AT HOLKHAM.

course, apply to a single sty, but for a large piggery other plans might be drawn out. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that some of the most successful breeders in Great Britain are in the habit of using any kind of outhouse for a pigsty, and often it is of a very flimsy description. They think that this does not matter, because a change of ground is an excellent means of promoting health in a pig.

HAYMAKING.

Complaints have been made throughout the country that the weather is much too cold for this time of year. According to the "Shepherd's Calendar," June ought to be a month of scorching sun and sultry skies, the heat being much needed to bring on almost every kind of crop. Instead of that, we have scarcely had one day that was entirely bright and sunny, and the consequence is that the outlook, which had become quite cheering at the end of May, is now slightly overcast. From the gardening counties we hear that fruit is not filling as it ought to; from the corn-growing districts it is reported that the progress of cereals has been checked; while, worst of all, the hay harvest has been seriously threatened. On one or two lucky farms in the South of England much of it has already been got in safe and well, but as we travel northward we find it in a very backward condition, and a fortnight of dry, clear weather would now be very much appreciated. Some days have been quite hot in June, but it has been merely the sun's heat, as they have been followed by very chilly nights.

DANISH FARMING.

The official report upon land in Denmark ought to be read by all who are interested in agrarian problems belonging to our own country. In Great Britain the tendency for the last

century and a-half has been for land to become massed under one or two great landowners. At no long-distant date there were a very large number of yeomen, or small proprietors, who have practically disappeared. It is remarkable that an exactly opposite process has been going on in Denmark; that is to say, the land has been passing from the hands of the large proprietors into those of the peasants. The distribution of the land is thus given: "Estates from $\frac{1}{4}$ to 6 acres, 92,656, having a total acreage of 155,766, or an average per farm of 1.6 statute acres each; from 6 acres to $24\frac{1}{2}$ acres, 66,491 estates of 836,658 acres, or an average of 12.6 statute acres each; over $24\frac{1}{2}$ acres, 73,889 estates of 5,514,978 acres, or an average of 74.7 statute acres each. The average size of the holdings in Denmark is $23\frac{1}{2}$ statute acres each, and 90 per cent. of the occupiers are proprietors." This transfer, according to the report of the deputation which visited Denmark in 1903 on behalf of the Irish Department of Agriculture, received a great stimulus in 1851 by the establishment of companies, who provided capital for the holdings. Of course, repaying the principal and interest of the loan is something of a burden, but it is cheerfully borne, because the farmer sees that in the end it will leave him master of the situation. Concerning the farming itself, it has to be kept in mind that its object is the production of milk. The cows are house-fed for the greater part of the year, and grazed for only fourteen weeks in summer, when they are let out for about six hours in the day. The type of farm is thus described: "In shape the buildings are in a square for a farm of about twenty-four acres and upwards; but in smaller farms the buildings are formed in an L shape. In the square farmsteads one side is given up to the dwelling-house, and though this generally faces the approach road, the door



MOWING AT HOLKHAM.

is at the back—inside the square. The farm is entered by an archway, generally on one side of the square; opposite the house is the hay and straw barn; on one side are the stables for the horses and the thrashing-floor; opposite these again is the byre and pigsty. Outside of the square, and behind the byre and pigsty, are generally placed the manure-pits, one being for the dry manure and the other for the liquid." If the writer had more fully described the system of farming he would have added to his paper. He does, however, give a good account of the manner in which farmers collect manure and save it, so that they are saved the expense of purchasing artificials. This information would have been still more valuable if accompanied by some account of the arable farming for the dairy which is carried on. Is permanent pasture as necessary as our farmers think?

A NEW FISHING BOOK.

IT would be out of place in these columns to write an ordinary review of the two new volumes of the "COUNTRY LIFE Library of Sport," devoted to the subject of fishing, especially as contributions of my own form a very small part of their contents. I may, however, congratulate Mr. Hutchinson, who is the editor, on the completion of a task of no slight difficulty, in dealing, as he does, not merely with British fish, but with the fish for which Britons angle, including such foreigners as the tarpon, the mahseer, the Jew fish, and even the shark. Mr. Boulenger, F.R.S., writes on the natural history of

each family of fish, and it is hoped that the angler may find in his contributions all the scientific information he can reasonably require with regard to the objects of his pursuit, although, of course, the natural history notes given in such a space could not pretend to be exhaustive. The first volume of upwards of 500 pages deals in three parts with the salmonidae, salmon, trout, and grayling, while the second of 445 pages is also divided into three parts, the first describing tarpon, mahseer, and other foreign fish; the second, coarse, pond, and river fish, from the pike to the eel; while the third, on the now favourite pastime of sea-fishing, has

been left in the competent hands of Mr. Aflalo. Probably no branch of sport has made more progress in the last generation than this formerly despised recreation, but the Cinderella of angling has now obtained its promotion, mainly in consequence of the substitution of rods and light tackle for the clumsy hand-lines which satisfied our ancestors. The plan of the work is to obtain the assistance of experts in the various subjects dealt with, and to leave them independently responsible for their own contributions. I thought that I had even discovered a contradiction between the views expressed by Dr. Kingston Barton in his chapter on the food and feeding of salmon, and those of Mr. J. J. Hardy in his on fly-fishing for salmon, with reference to the vexed question whether these fish feed in fresh water. "The evidences," writes the former, "which may be taken as conclusive that salmon do not feed in fresh water are so numerous, that one puzzles at the unbelief of the multitude." This seemed a hard saying to me, as I have adopted a different view in print, and I was glad to welcome an



LEFT-HANDED "LCOP" CAST.

ally in Mr. J. J. Hardy, who writes as follows:

"Why do salmon take a fly? This is a question often asked, the more so as scientists tell us that salmon do not feed in fresh water, a statement which, however, cannot be accepted by anglers. We may fairly ask scientists, when we see salmon caught with worm, prawn, or minnow, which they often take into their gullets as a trout will do, what they are doing with them there? If this is not *prima facie* evidence that they are feeding upon them, and on this count the grand jury of scientists throw out the bill, there is little chance of getting a conviction against *Salmo salar* for feeding in fresh water. That salmon are rarely caught with anything in their stomachs is quite true, but it may be that it is only the hungry fish which take a fly or a bait, and those whose stomachs are empty. Or it may be that the salmon's power of ejecting food is so great that in the struggle to free himself he

ejects everything in his stomach. . . . The fact of catching him with natural baits which he is attempting to swallow, is conclusive evidence that he does feed in fresh water."

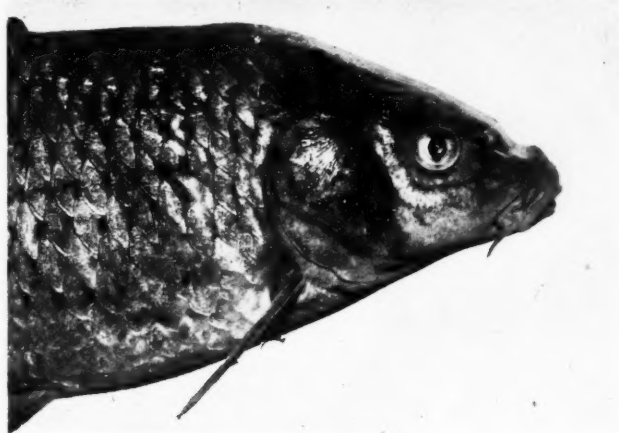
But on further study of Dr. Barton's views, I think that the contradiction is only apparent. "Practical sportsmen," he writes, "know well enough that it is only after fatigue that salmon can be at all tempted, and that the appetite only remains a few hours or days at most after the fish has moved up into a new pool." What Dr. Barton evidently means is that salmon do not feed to nourish themselves in fresh water, and that "Nature has caused the fish to be able to exist without feeding for many months, as it certainly can do." He disposes of the supposed conclusive



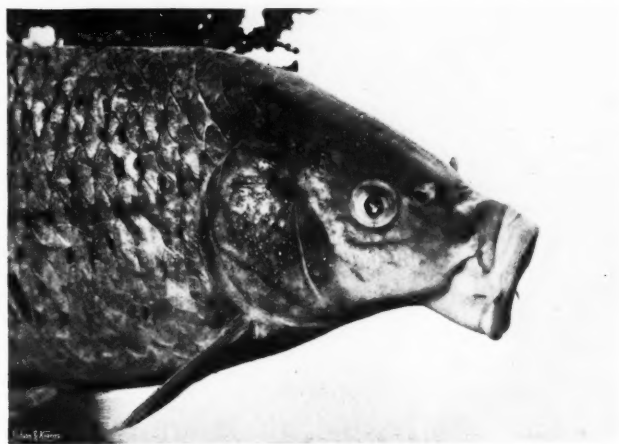
THROWING THE FLY—THE DOWNWARD CUT.

In addition to practical instruction in every description of salmon-fishing—spinning and prawning, as well as fishing with the fly—there is a great deal of information on the art of casting, by that well-known expert, Mr. J. J. Hardy. The improvements

evidence in the Scotch Fishery Board Reports, 1891, that fish were found suffering from an intestinal gastric catarrh which quite forbade of any digestion. "It was quickly found that this theory was founded upon the fact that proper precautions had not been taken in chemically fixing or preparing the intestines of fish." He sums up, and quotes all the evidence upon this controversial topic, and I refer those who are interested in the question to his exhaustive chapter.



CARP—MOUTH SHUT.



CARP—MOUTH OPEN.

in instantaneous photography have enabled the publishers to present fac-simile representations of most methods of using the rod, those of salmon angling being taken from Mr. Hardy and from Lord Walter Gordon-Lennox, who furnishes a chapter on

the Spey cast, which he has practised with such success on the celebrated water at Gordon Castle. The illustrations of casting for trout with the dry fly, a subject treated of by Mr. F. M. Halford, were specially taken from snapshots of Mr. E. Valentine Corrie, who was good enough to devote the necessary time to the labour of casting; Mr. Horace Hutchinson himself writes on fishing with the wet fly; and Mr. Martin Smith gives an amusing and picturesque description of a typical day on the Test. He



THROWING FROM THE ROCKS—FORWARD.

writes with all the enthusiasm of a fanatic, and can make one understand, if one does not altogether agree with his thesis, that to the man who has once developed a love of dry-fly fishing in the clear Hampshire streams all other fishing is naught. There is some truth in the criticism of the river keeper, which he quotes with approval, that "any fool can catch a salmon," but I would rather put it that any fool *may* catch a salmon. The skill required is certainly not so great as in his favourite sport, but the expert will have far the most success in the end.

"Perhaps a recruit
May chance to shoot
Great General Buonaparte!"

or a tyro may win at a game of bridge at the Turf Club; but skill will tell in the end in all sports and games, although luck may have its day. Char and grayling are left in the hands of Mr. R. B. Marston, who also deals with the various coarse fish with the exception of the pike and perch, which are left to Mr. Jardine.

In addition to the chapters on natural history, practical instruction, description, and advice as to tackle and equipment, there is information, historical and practical, on the artificial hatching and rearing of trout and salmon, the making of passes, and Norwegian angling, with a list of the rivers, routes, seasons,

by Captain Radclyffe. Mr. J. W. Willis Bund writes of salmon-fishing in the Estuaries, and also contributes a compendious *résumé* of the Fishery Laws, which forms an appropriate termination to the book. Mr. J. Turner-Turner describes many exciting struggles with the tarpon and other gigantic game fish of Florida, and Mr. Hercules Ross is responsible for the chapter on mahseer-fishing in India. The illustrations are numerous, in all 267. In addition to the photographs of casting, taken expressly with a view to descriptive education, there are snap-shots of almost every description of fishing in all parts of the world to which the English race carry their tackle, their keenness, and their perseverance. It is hoped that these pictures may recall to anglers their experiences and exploits in foreign lands, and in favoured spots in their native islands. To me, as I turned over the pages, they recalled many memories of halcyon days. There are also many reproductions of quaint old illustrations and head-pieces and title-pages of those standard works to be found among the 7,797 volumes of fishing literature collected by the late Mr. Alred Denison. There are, in addition, five full-page coloured representations of salmon, sea-trout, loch and brown trout flies; and if anyone finds his favourites omitted, he may remember that tastes differ, perhaps, more on this thorny subject than any other.

A. E. GATHORNE-HARPY.

ON THE BANKS OF A RIVER.

NOW that the bright days are with us, and each one grows longer, warmer, and sunnier, many of those living in busy, crowded towns feel an ardent longing,

and a restless desire which will not be denied, to be up and away from the throng, to see something of the country, with its fresh flowers and green meadows, or to wander along the banks of a river. One charming river I know and love, which rises in the chalk downs of Wiltshire and Somerset, and flows through peaceful, pastoral Dorset, past many a stately mansion and many a quiet old-fashioned village, with tiny white-washed thatched cottages nestling beneath the shadow of a grey church tower. It ripples through dewy meadows, knee deep with fragrant hay, through pastures where the brown-eyed cattle graze, and through fields of crimson clover, the sporting ground of bees and butterflies. The stream is fringed by stately elms and oaks, willows and alders, and here and there a solitary poplar, looking as though it were the guardian of the valley. But on and on the river flows, with many a bend and tortuous twist,

turning with a drowsy murmur the wheels of several picturesque old water-mills, whose stones are crumbling with age, and whose roofs are moss and lichen covered.

Onward it flows, until at last it reaches the confines of the forest. Here the placid waters reflect the changing roseate hues of the blossoms of the rhododendrons (just now bursting into flower) and the ruddy stems of the pines, which grow upon the northern banks of the stream. The river has a luxuriant growth of sedge, water-lily, yellow iris, reed, and water plantain, and is fringed by the dainty forget-me-not and fragrant meadow-sweet. Creamy cow-parsley, honey-suckle, and wild rose soon will be running riot in the hedgerow, so that the air is almost intoxicating with the sweet odour gathered from a thousand thousand wild flowers. Lower down the river we reach Blackwater Ferry, and there it is no infrequent thing to find several artists at work with brush or pencil, for the stream has provided the theme of scores of pictures, and many painters and Nature-



THE MILL HOUSE.

*AT EVENTIDE.*

lovers have found consolation and comfort while working in this lovely valley, and, maybe, have gone back to the busy world and the ways of men, strengthened and helped by the ministry of such simple things as the quiet rustling of sedge or reed, the murmur of the river, the matchless song of the birds. Common things some term these, yet I know that many have learnt the secret of happiness, and, perchance, obtained a glimpse of "perfect peace," beside these quiet waters.

The river is noted for its kingfishers; it is no uncommon sight to see one dart by in a flash, or another perched on an overhanging bough contemplating with keen meditative eye the

waters beneath. Perhaps the number of birds to be seen may be the result of the Wild Birds' Protection Act, for we find nightingale, sedge-warbler, heron, wild duck, moorhen, bullfinch, wren, and many others, and bird calls to bird from every tree, hedgerow, and undergrowth. Of fish, too, there is an abundance: salmon and trout, besides roach, pike, dace, jack; indeed, I am told that it has almost the best coarse-fishing in England; and if we lean over one of the many old stone bridges (some with eight or nine arches dating back from A.D. 1200), we can usually see in the deep, dark shadows a speckled trout, or three or more chub taking a sun-bath.

Still lower down the river, past the old sheep-wash, we reach the little hamlet of Iford with its thatched cottage homes. These, I fear, will ere long become but a memory of the past, for certain red-built modern villas with metallic slated roofs are fast crowding upon the more homely cottages. At this point the stream is spanned by a grand old bridge with massive piers, across which rush motor, coach, char-à-banc, cycle, carriage, and that nerve-racking production, the steam traction-engine, with several ponderous trucks at its rear. Away they all rumble with turmoil, din, and huge clouds of dust. One turns with a sense of glad relief to the quiet waterway, which here is swift and strong and flowing seaward. At this point good boats can be hired, and, taking one, we drift past steep sandy banks, where the sand-martins have their nests, and we soon reach Wick Ferry, much loved by artists, for there is an abundance of material to hand for picture-making. I have seen this river when Nature awakes from her winter sleep, and the trees are decked with catkins and soft green-budding foliage, kingcups and cuckoo-flowers line the banks, daisy and orchis bestrew the meadows. Overhead the azure of heaven, across whose limitless space snowy banks of cumulus cloud drift on and on, slowly and silently, yet grandly and majestically, the outcome of a sublime irresistible force. Near by stands a tiny cottage with a large garden, in which are blooming lilac, wallflower, tulip, double daisy, with a number of old apple and pear trees in blossom, beautiful with their radiant freshness and purity. While I stood

She sped me on my way with a "God bless thee." Outside the garden I turned to watch some little lasses and lads at play. Still they have the same old games. "Here we go gathering nuts and may," "Oranges and lemons," played with joyous steps and rippling laughter, but their glad young voices fell upon my heart with a sense of pain, for they awoke memories and visions of the old forgotten past—days of cloudless sunshine undimmed by care, faces and voices of long-lost playfellows, some who are toiling in distant lands, some, alas! who are estranged, and others who have vanished into the "Silent Land." But my eyes turned to the blossoming trees and the flowers in my hand and I was comforted.

Again I have seen the river in grey days and cold, when storm-clouds swept from the west, and the wind crept round the trees with a dreary mournful wail, almost a dirge, which was echoed and re-echoed by the rustling sedge, chanting their never-ceasing song in a minor key. Seagulls followed the stream's course, and they, too, winged their way with sad piercing cries. The old folks shook their heads, murmuring the while "Ah! they betoken storms and evil; bad luck allus do follow the seagull." Yet even under these conditions the river has a wild fascinating beauty of its own.

Yet once again I have stood beside the river at eventide, when westward drifted massive banks of grey and purple cloud, fringed with golden and crimson hues; shafts of glittering light fell upon the surface of the water with the changing sheen

of opal and ruby. From the top of the tallest tree a thrush sang an exquisite melody of pure passionless joy. Near by in the reeds tiny sedge birds kept up a subdued chattering like an accompaniment. Softly and dreamily the river rippled seawards with a tender harmonious cadence. As I followed the path on towards the river's mouth I fell into a reverie, and the river seemed to sing a song of infinite calm, of unutterable tenderness, and of "The love that never faileth," with harmonies waxing louder and stronger and more convincing as it broadened to the sea, until at last the stream was merged into those vast depths from which there is no return. But the melody was borne aloft by the night wind, who whispered it to the souls of men, some few of whom heard it and understood, and went on their way rejoicing. So has it sung through long dim ages past; so perchance will it sing for countless centuries to come. Realising this, one feels how short is the span of each individual life, and how inexpressibly precious are the few hours we can snatch from the busy world, to spend beside the quiet waters in which to garner memories of golden sunshine, blossoming flower, or song of bird. Memories which will in the aftermath of life, or in the dark days, bring back to us these hours of joy, and once more unlock the "Gate called Beautiful."

I cannot refrain from quoting

a verse from Southey, as it seems to apply so well to this South Country river:

"Through pleasant banks the quiet stream
Went winding pleasantly;
By fragrant fir groves now it past,
And now through alder shores,
Through green and fertile meadows now
It silently ran by.
The flag flower blossom'd on its side,
And willow tresses waved,
The flowing current furrow'd round
The water-lily's floating leaf."

To all those who love Nature, and those with spent nerves and tired brain, who are weary of the busy, toiling world, I know



PAST DEWY MEADOWS.

looking at these an old lady came with feeble steps slowly down the path; she was clad in homely brown linsey, with chequered apron and sun-bonnet. "I see you be admiring my apple trees." "Yes," I responded, "I was thinking how wonderfully beautiful they are; they seem to promise so many things." "Aye, so they do, so they do; I be main glad I've lived to see 'em once more. My 'usband he planted 'em when we were first married, and I allus says I do wish when I get to the next world I'll find apple blossom there, as well as little children." Heartily agreeing with her desire, I turned to say good-bye, but she would have me take a "posy of flowers," so in return I told her one poet had called them

"Emblems of our own great resurrection,
Emblems of the bright and better land."



OVERGROWN WITH SEDGES.

nothing that can bring such calm and quiet contentment as a ramble along the banks of some tranquil river in peaceful, "lovable" old England; to sketch, photograph, fish, botanise, or, perhaps, even only to dream.

MARY C. COTTAM.

SPORT IN ALASKA.

"SUMMER AND FALL IN WESTERN ALASKA" (Colonel Claude Cane). Colonel Cane's book has a special claim to attention, because it is about the first account that has been given in English, or any other written language, of a sporting tour in Alaska. That people have been blind to the possibilities of this country, so fine and rich in all ways, for so many years, is a surprising fact which does not fail to furnish our writer with comment. The indifference of Great Britain to the Alaskan Boundary Question is made matter of special criticism in his preface. The Americans bought the whole territory for a "mere song" from the Russians, who must now be by no means pleased at the conditions of sale, since the richness of the country has been ascertained. At the same time, while the book has this claim on our interest, it does not pretend to be saying more than the first word about the possibilities of Alaska as a sporting country. Colonel Cane is perfectly candid. He makes no claim to give us more than he does give. It is likely enough that he may have more "up his sleeve," that he does not give away, for a man going to a new country like this, and liking everything about it (except the mosquitoes, which are described as positively awful, in spite of gloves, veils, netting, and all protections), is not to be expected to tell everyone exactly where to go, and so to spoil all chances for the writer or anyone else coming after. But while this is said, let it not be supposed that Colonel Cane is one of the jealous and grudging sportsmen who are not worthy of that great name. He will give anyone going out to shoot in Alaska the most generous benefit of his own previous experience, of which something, at least, is told in this book.

We are some long while in arriving at Alaska. There is a good deal of gossip about Seattle and the travelling upward from there. That is all good reading, but it is not really Alaska; and we are rather impatient to be there. However, in course of time we arrive; and let us say at once that we should have a much

more clear idea of where we arrive and of what we do when we get there if Colonel Cane had given us even the most outlined map with his book. But we have to get on without it, even as the author himself had to get on without any chart that was very trustworthy, and so found himself hard and fast aground, now and again.

Bears were the first big game sought by Colonel Cane—the Kodiak bear, bigger cousin of the big grizzly. Distinctly the Kodiak bear seems to have claim to stand distinct as a species. His dentition is quite different from that of the grizzly, besides that he is larger and that the shape of the skull is slightly different. Of the Kodiak bear there appear to be at least three varieties, that the American hunter sent out for scientific purposes, with a Government grant, probably would divide into species; but this is a matter that wants a little more looking into before definite views are reached. Colonel Cane, at all events, does not venture to express any. Perhaps he was a little late in the year for bears—he was delayed by the expected mobilisation of the Militia at home. Better specimens have been shot than he obtained, big though his were. His account of how he shot the bears after they had just scooped a big salmon from the river and were going back for another, is at once entertaining as a picture of the sport, of the manners of the bears, and of the numbers

of the salmon. He and his men used to get salmon, when they wanted them, by going into the water and clubbing them. This, at all events, is the way to make a bag, if not to make sport. The rifle with which the big bears were shot was a .256 Mannlicher, the rifle so generally coming into use for stag-stalking in Scotland. It has a small bullet, but very high velocity, and flat trajectory. It gives a blow that destroys the life with its crash, expanding much more certainly than the big Paradox bullet, for which the Colonel has not much use. His battery consisted only of the Mannlicher and the Paradox. The Mannlicher jammed once, but it was the fault of carelessness, a pine needle having got in when the magazine was previously emptied, and not been extracted. It was an accident that was nearly fatal, but apart from this the Mannlicher never failed. Clearly the writer is a first-class shot—nine heads of pine grouse shot off without a miss proves this sufficiently; yet he also speaks of missing a very simple shot at close range at a ram of *Ovis Dalli*, which shows that he can tell the truth, as well as shoot, like a Scythian of old. A few confessions of failure help our trust in travellers' tales vastly.

After the bears were done with, the Colonel moved on into mountain ground for sheep—the *Ovis Dalli*. For a long while he met with disappointment, that is to say, with no rams; but after many days all was made good to him, and he had five fine heads in one day. Obviously this, apart from the added excitement that the hunting of the bear possesses, in the risk attaching to it, is the finest sport of all in Alaska. The keen senses of the sheep make them a quarry difficult of approach. Colonel Cane found the Indian hunters very poor at the shikari business, though, with one exception, able and willing workers. The Indians that Colonel Cane had with him do not seem to have credited the sheep with any sense of smell at all—a grave error, as he quickly proved to them. Had he chanced to obtain the services of any of the Aleuts, or natives of the Aleutian Islands, who are probably crossed with Russians, he would most likely have found them far more useful as hunters.

After the sheep came the turn of the moose, in the woodlands. Here, too, the writer was successful in obtaining good specimens, far larger in the horn than any on the eastern side of the continent, but in no case had he the fortune to bring out record specimens. He went into the country just before the enactment of the Alaskan Game Laws, and only heard of the law just in time

to get the required permit to bring his trophies out. A full text of the Act as it was passed for the protection of the big game is given at the end of his volume; but the reader ought to be warned that important modifications have been passed since, so that it does not do to take the Act, as it appears here, as a guide. The intending visitor to Alaska who wants to bring out big trophies must be more fully posted up to date. Even with all its later modifications this Act, though it controls the sporting hunter, does not sufficiently protect the beasts from the far more destructive attacks of those, chiefly Indians, who kill them for food. Some drastic legislation in this direction is still needed for their preservation. Colonel Cane gives it as his opinion that seal is preferable to bear as food. He describes the climate as delightful, the flowers and berries being in greatest profusion. He gives clear information as to the best equipment in the way of tents

and so on, with a wise hint as to the prudence of buying as much as possible from the storekeeper nearest to the scene of active operations, in order to make him your friend, especially with a view to his valuable help in the engagement of good Indian servants.

On the whole this is a book that does not go very far into its subject, even as the author did not go very far into the vast territory. It does not make any claim to exhaustive treatment. But it is a book on a new country, of which the sporting pioneers who have put their experiences on record have been remarkably few. As such, it is a book that cannot fail to be very valuable to any who are thinking of following in any degree along the writer's footsteps, and it is a book that is likely to induce many to turn their thoughts in that direction, for the comparatively new countries where such opportunities present themselves to the big-game hunter are very few.

A CORNER OF SUSSEX.

THERE is a little corner of the down-country which the tourist has not marked as his own, where within sight and sound of the surges are deep lanes and winding rivers, and the names of the villages that cluster with lichened roofs—green as the beetle's wing—round the old, old churches are like music to the ear—Sompting, Lancing, Ferring, Tarring, Salvington, and a host of others. There is such wealth of colour—the glowing green meadows, where the little streams wind slowly over the water-cresses, the thatched homestead, beautified by wind and weather, the cottage gardens brimming with flowers, and for background the rolling downs with their folds of purple shadow. The "grace of years" that Swinburne applies to Shoreham, broods over the whole landscape. Even the farms are built on the plan that the Angles and Saxons brought over with them. The old order still lurks here. The smock-frock can still be seen, and the crook in the hand of the shepherd, and that within an hour and a-half of London.



A. B. Warburg.

NEW SHOREHAM.

The pedestrian will find that his feet can carry him a new road every day, and not only a new road, but a new footpath, which is more to his liking. Tarring is now, alas! little more than a suburb of Worthing. Its wonderful timbered house is falling into decay, and there is but a slip of picturesque street in contrast to rows of stucco villas. One or two panelled parlours still remain, and kindly housewives will show them, with a glimpse of ancient fig trees in back-yards—fig trees that have seen centuries come and go, and even now bear wonderful fruit.

But if Tarring is become sadly urban, the same cannot be said of Salvington, which lies across the fields. A footpath near the church leads to this world-forgotten hamlet, presided over by The Spotted Cow. Yet Salvington need not be humble, for she produced a son whose name is for all time. In that dumpy, half-timber cottage, easily seen from the high road, John Selden was born.

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flanked by white railings, looks its best when the children come out of school, hurrying down to the cross-roads, where the small pond and the lichened wall, and those irregular red roofs, remind one of some little German town. "Bang!" from the fields over the hedgerows. A moment later a gaitered figure strides down the road, poor bunny in hand, his pretty white paws stiffening, his soft brown head dangling. It must be sad to say good-bye to the sun and Findon on such a fresh spring morning.

A dangerous rival to Findon is Angmering, with its white-wash and thatch. Each village here has its characteristic style of building. There is an eighteenth century atmosphere over Angmering—a Hugh Thomson air. And a meet at Angmering away in the Decoy Woods, with the pale gold sunshine dappling the pink coats as they move up through the woods, is as pretty a sight as you can wish on a winter morning. Then, stepping eastward, are Old and New Shoreham, with the river flowing slowly to the sea. There is a foreign air about New Shoreham, as it is

approached over the long causeway. "How Dutch," you can hear the visitor say. And the opal haze that gathers over the mud-flats as the dusk draws on, heightens the illusion for those who know well those luminous twilights of Holland.

Further back lies Old Shoreham, with its mossy church looking over the ancient wooden bridge. Here it is well to linger, watching the water flowing through the piles and looking up to the long sweep of downs. How they draw one—the downs—with their fleeting shadows and patches of sunlight and their wonderful outlines against the sky. Behind their massive shoulders lies the gem of these Sussex villages, Steyning. Up through sleepy Sompting, with its queer, blank-looking church—it has but one counterpart in the world, and that is in Northern France—up the stony field-

paths, and so into the very heart of the down country. Hardly a soul to be met on these airy uplands, with the hills billowing all around and a distant glimpse of the sea. Springy turf, set with "fingers and thumbs," and wild thyme and short-stalked daisies, the scent of the new ploughed furrow, the whistle of the plough-boy in the valley below, and ever upwards through the gorse and the brambles and the thorn trees till the high tableland is reached, and we look down upon the Weald. There is a deserted farm flanked by wind-blown trees, and then the road winds downward into Steyning. Leaving the heights, one feels as though one were stepping into the Land of Beulah, so peaceful, sunny, and smiling lies the country below.

Steyning itself is the incarnation of the picturesque—a townlet of half-timber houses, and wonderful side streets of yellow plaster with over-hanging upper storeys, like a street on the stage. One expects to see Falstaff and the Merry Wives, not a bicycle and a motor-car. There is a Mint, too, fallen from its high estate. Once it was a prison house, so the people say. Then there is a wonderful Jane Austen house, set back from the street, with steps leading down to it, and a little daisy-covered lawn; and the inn again is quite Pickwickian. Steyning is a spot in which one delights to fancy all one's

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favourite fiction people, it is so adaptable. Steyning must be seen to be believed.

There may be some to whom the mild charms of this little corner of Sussex may seem tame; if so we pity them, for to those on whom its beauty steals it has the subtle fragrance of sweet briar and Sweet Williams and pansies, and all the dear delights of old-time gardens.

BELLA SIDNEY WOOLF.

IN THE GARDEN.

STIRRING THE SOIL.

ONE of England's best gardeners gives the following advice: "Doubtless the Dutch hoe is one of the most useful tools in the garden, but it is an implement which frequently hangs idle in the shed at times when it might be put to good use on the ground. Next to deep cultivation, that of stirring the soil is the most important item, and it applies to both the kitchen and flower gardens. At this season of the year, when seedlings are coming up, and the growth of potatoes is peeping through the ground, the soil between the rows becomes hard and baked, under the influence of sunshine. If for no other reason, then, the hoe should be used as a means of letting in the air. Also in dry seasons hoeing means a reduction in watering and mulching, as the constant stirring of the top soil breaks up the channels through which moisture is drawn into the air, and the progress of absorption is checked."

GROWING WATERCRESS.

We are pleased to see in the recently issued Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society a note about growing Watercress in the garden. The writer mentions that attention has recently been called to the risk of eating Watercress unless direct knowledge is obtainable as to the way in which it has been grown, as much of it is said to be cultivated in beds to which sewage, from various sources, finds its way. A Fellow of the society points out how easily it can be grown in almost any vegetable garden. The advice is as follows: "Choose, for convenience, a spot near a garden tap; take off 4in. or so of the surface soil from the plot, say, 3ft. by 2ft., and slightly puddle the sides and bottom with clay, but not ramming it so firmly as to prevent the water percolating sufficiently to avoid stagnation. Nearly fill this artificial basin with good soil, and in early spring plant it with cuttings of fresh, clean Watercress, obtained from a wholesome source. Keep the soil moist, and the cuttings will soon spread and cover the bed; and if small, clean pebbles can be strewn over the surface they will keep the roots moist and the leaves clean when the heavy rain would otherwise spatter them with mud. Seed can be used, if good, clean cuttings are not obtainable, but several weeks' growth is gained by planting cuttings."

SWEET PEAS—A NOTE IN SEASON.

Sweet Peas are either opening their flowers or the buds are visible—it all depends upon when the seed was sown, in autumn, or in early spring in pots, and the seedlings put out in the places they are to beautify. We were reading Mr. Robert Sydenham's little book about Sweet Peas a few days ago, and noticed the practical advice he gives for bringing the flowers to perfection in summer. It is at this time that failures are likely to occur, especially when blooms are desired for exhibition. This well-known grower recommends that in dry seasons the plants should be watered at least two or three times every fortnight, and that *thoroughly*. "My system," he says, "is to get a three-gallon can with a fine rose, and to water six or eight clumps at a time, applying the water three or four times in succession, thus giving every clump two or three gallons at each application. I find that it is infinitely better to give a part a good watering one day, a part the next, and so on, than to go over the lot every day, and only



A. B. Warburg. CHURCH STREET, STEYNING.

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half do it. One gentleman I know who grows Sweet Peas to perfection, has ordinary 3in. drain pipes placed in the ground about 18in. under the surface, with a circular one at the end to come level with the ground; he is thus able to fill the pipes, and the water percolates through the joints and keeps the roots moist. The seed-pods must never be allowed to form or to remain on the plants many days, otherwise the plants will go out of flower and be lost for the season. Sweet Peas differ from many other flowers, as with some, when you once cut the flower, the plant is over for the season; but with Sweet Peas, the more you cut them the more profusely they seem to flower. Some seasons a disease appears, and the leaves get spotty and yellow. If this be allowed to develop it withers and kills the plant. The best remedy is a quarter of an ounce of sulphate of copper and a quarter of an ounce of sulphate of lime well mixed in half a pint of water, and then put the preparation in a two-gallon can, or one ounce of each for eight gallons. Make a little trench round the clump and fill with this mixture. Fill up the trench again, and the result will be most beneficial."

THINNING OUT ANNUAL FLOWERS.

If annual flowers are to last long in beauty they must be thinned out, and this year especially so, the moist weather of late encouraging an almost rank growth, which means that, when crowded, flowers are few and of short duration. In few races is thinning out more needful than the Poppy tribe, which are sown one hour and seem to flower the next, and germinate as freely as Mustard and Cress. Thick sowing is one of the common mistakes, not only of the amateur gardener, but of those that call themselves "professional," but our practice is to allow every plant sufficient space for its proper development, whether a Poppy, a Mignonette, or a Pea. Go over the rows of annuals before the growth becomes weakened, and thin out very carefully where the plants are too thick, lest the neighbouring one be disturbed unduly. Practise this in the flower as well as in the kitchen garden, and the reward will be a longer season, and finer individual flowers. We noticed a bed in the garden of one of our famous amateurs, the seedlings in which were quite 5in. apart, and the plant was Love-in-a-Mist (*Nigella*). We know this group will be a success, and such a carpet of colour as can only come from intelligent culture.

WISTARIA-TIME.

The illustration shows a wall of the Wistaria at Aqualate Hall, Newport, Salop, and it serves as a reminder of the beauty of this lilac flower from Japan, the fairest introduction that has yet come from that land of Cherry and Iris. The Wistaria is so familiar that it is unnecessary to describe it. Over many an old cottage front it is now in its fullest beauty, the rugged, gnarled, and twisted stem hidden with a veil of lilac blossom. The Wistaria with the longest cluster is *multijuga*; it is of much the same shade of colour as the common one.



THE WISTARIA.

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approached over the long causeway. "How Dutch," you can hear the visitor say. And the opal haze that gathers over the mud-flats as the dusk draws on, heightens the illusion for those who know well those luminous twilights of Holland.

Further back lies Old Shoreham, with its mossy church looking over the ancient wooden bridge. Here it is well to linger, watching the water flowing through the piles and looking up to the long sweep of downs. How they draw one—the downs—with their fleeting shadows and patches of sunlight and their wonderful outlines against the sky. Behind their massive shoulders lies the gem of these Sussex villages, Steyning. Up through sleepy Sompting, with its queer, blank-looking church—it has but one counterpart in the world, and that is in Northern France—up the stony field-paths, and so into the very heart of the down-country. Hardly a soul to be met on these airy uplands, with the hills billowing all around and a distant glimpse of the sea. Springy turf, set with "fingers and thumbs," and wild thyme and short-stalked daisies, the scent of the new ploughed furrow, the whistle of the plough-boy in the valley below, and ever upwards through the gorse and the brambles and the thorn trees till the high tableland is reached, and we look down upon the Weald. There is a deserted farm flanked by wind-blown trees, and then the road winds downward into Steyning. Leaving the heights, one feels as though one were stepping into the Land of Beulah, so peaceful, sunny, and smiling lies the country below.

Steyning itself is the incarnation of the picturesque—a townlet of half-timber houses, and wonderful side streets of yellow plaster with over-hanging upper storeys, like a street on the stage. One expects to see Falstaff and the Merry Wives, not a bicycle and a motor-car. There is a Mint, too, fallen from its high estate. Once it was a prison house, so the people say. Then there is a wonderful Jane Austen house, set back from the street, with steps leading down to it, and a little daisy-covered lawn; and the inn again is quite Pickwickian. Steyning is a spot in which one delights to fancy all one's

favourite fiction people, it is so adaptable. Steyning must be seen to be believed.

There may be some to whom the mild charms of this little corner of Sussex may seem tame; if so we pity them, for to those on whom its beauty steals it has the subtle fragrance of sweet briar and Sweet Williams and pansies, and all the dear delights of old-time gardens.

BELLA SIDNEY WOOLF.

IN THE GARDEN.

STIRRING THE SOIL.

ONE of England's best gardeners gives the following advice: "Doubtless the Dutch hoe is one of the most useful tools in the garden, but it is an implement which frequently hangs idle in the shed at times when it might be put to good use on the ground. Next to deep cultivation, that of stirring the soil is the most important item, and it applies to both the kitchen and flower gardens. At this season of the year, when seedlings are coming up, and the growth of potatoes is peeping through the ground, the soil between the rows becomes hard and baked, under the influence of sunshine. If for no other reason, then, the hoe should be used as a means of letting in the air. Also in dry seasons hoeing means a reduction in watering and mulching, as the constant stirring of the top soil breaks up the channels through which moisture is drawn into the air, and the progress of absorption is checked."

GROWING WATERCRESS.

We are pleased to see in the recently issued Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society a note about growing Watercress in the garden. The writer mentions that attention has recently been called to the risk of eating Watercress unless direct knowledge is obtainable as to the way in which it has been grown, as much of it is said to be cultivated in beds to which sewage, from various sources, finds its way. A Fellow of the society points out how easily it can be grown in almost any vegetable garden. The advice is as follows: "Choose, for convenience, a spot near a garden tap; take off 4 in. or so of the surface soil from the plot, say, 3 ft. by 2 ft., and slightly puddle the sides and bottom with clay, but not ramming it so firmly as to prevent the water percolating sufficiently to avoid stagnation. Nearly fill this artificial basin with good soil, and in early spring plant it with cuttings of fresh, clean Watercress, obtained from a wholesome source. Keep the soil moist, and the cuttings will soon spread and cover the bed; and if small, clean pebbles can be strewn over the surface they will keep the roots moist and the leaves clean when the heavy rain would otherwise spatter them with mud. Seed can be used, if good, clean cuttings are not obtainable, but several weeks' growth is gained by planting cuttings."

SWEET PEAS—A NOTE IN SEASON.

Sweet Peas are either opening their flowers or the buds are visible—it all depends upon when the seed was sown, in autumn, or in early spring in pots, and the seedlings put out in the places they are to beautify. We were reading Mr. Robert Sydenham's little book about Sweet Peas a few days ago, and noticed the practical advice he gives for bringing the flowers to perfection in summer. It is at this time that failures are likely to occur, especially when blooms are desired for exhibition. This well-known grower recommends that in dry seasons the plants should be watered at least two or three times every fortnight, and that *thoroughly*. "My system," he says, "is to get a three-gallon can with a fine rose, and to water six or eight clumps at a time, applying the water three or four times in succession, thus giving every clump two or three gallons at each application. I find that it is infinitely better to give a part a good watering one day, a part the next, and so on, than to go over the lot every day, and only



A. B. Warburg. CHURCH STREET, STEYNING.

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half do it. One gentleman I know who grows Sweet Peas to perfection, has ordinary 3 in. drain pipes placed in the ground about 18 in. under the surface, with a circular one at the end to come level with the ground; he is thus able to fill the pipes, and the water percolates through the joints and keeps the roots moist. The seed-pods must never be allowed to form or to remain on the plants many days, otherwise the plants will go out of flower and be lost for the season. Sweet Peas differ from many other flowers, as with some, when you once cut the flower, the plant is over for the season; but with Sweet Peas, the more you cut them the more profusely they seem to flower. Some seasons a disease appears, and the leaves get spotty and yellow. If this be allowed to develop it withers and kills the plant. The best remedy is a quarter of an ounce of sulphate of copper and a quarter of an ounce of sulphate of lime well mixed in half a pint of water, and then put the preparation in a two-gallon can, or one ounce of each for eight gallons. Make a little trench round the clump and fill with this mixture. Fill up the trench again, and the result will be most beneficial."

THINNING OUT ANNUAL FLOWERS.

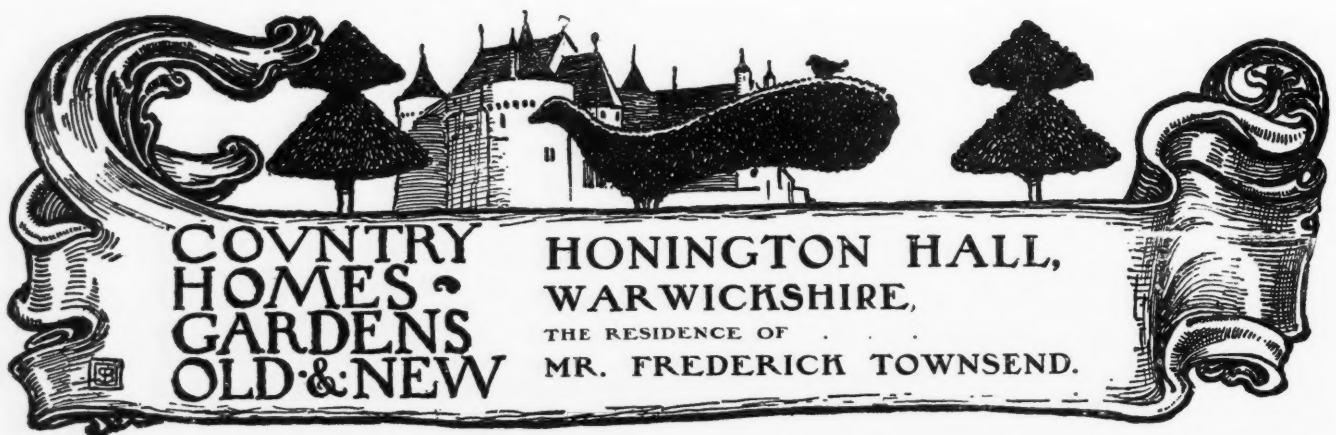
If annual flowers are to last long in beauty they must be thinned out, and this year especially so, the moist weather of late encouraging an almost rank growth, which means that, when crowded, flowers are few and of short duration. In few races is thinning out more needful than the Poppy tribe, which are sown one hour and seem to flower the next, and germinate as freely as Mustard and Cress. Thick sowing is one of the common mistakes, not only of the amateur gardener, but of those that call themselves "professional," but our practice is to allow every plant sufficient space for its proper development, whether a Poppy, a Mignonette, or a Pea. Go over the rows of annuals before the growth becomes weakened, and thin out very carefully where the plants are too thick, lest the neighbouring one be disturbed unduly. Practise this in the flower as well as in the kitchen garden, and the reward will be a longer season, and finer individual flowers. We noticed a bed in the garden of one of our famous amateurs, the seedlings in which were quite 5 in. apart, and the plant was Love-in-a-Mist (*Nigella*). We know this group will be a success, and such a carpet of colour as can only come from intelligent culture.

WISTARIA-TIME.

The illustration shows a wall of the Wistaria at Aqualate Hall, Newport, Salop, and it serves as a reminder of the beauty of this lilac flower from Japan, the fairest introduction that has yet come from that land of Cherry and Iris. The Wistaria is so familiar that it is unnecessary to describe it. Over many an old cottage front it is now in its fullest beauty, the rugged, gnarled, and twisted stem hidden with a veil of lilac blossom. The Wistaria with the longest cluster is *multijuga*; it is of much the same shade of colour as the common one.



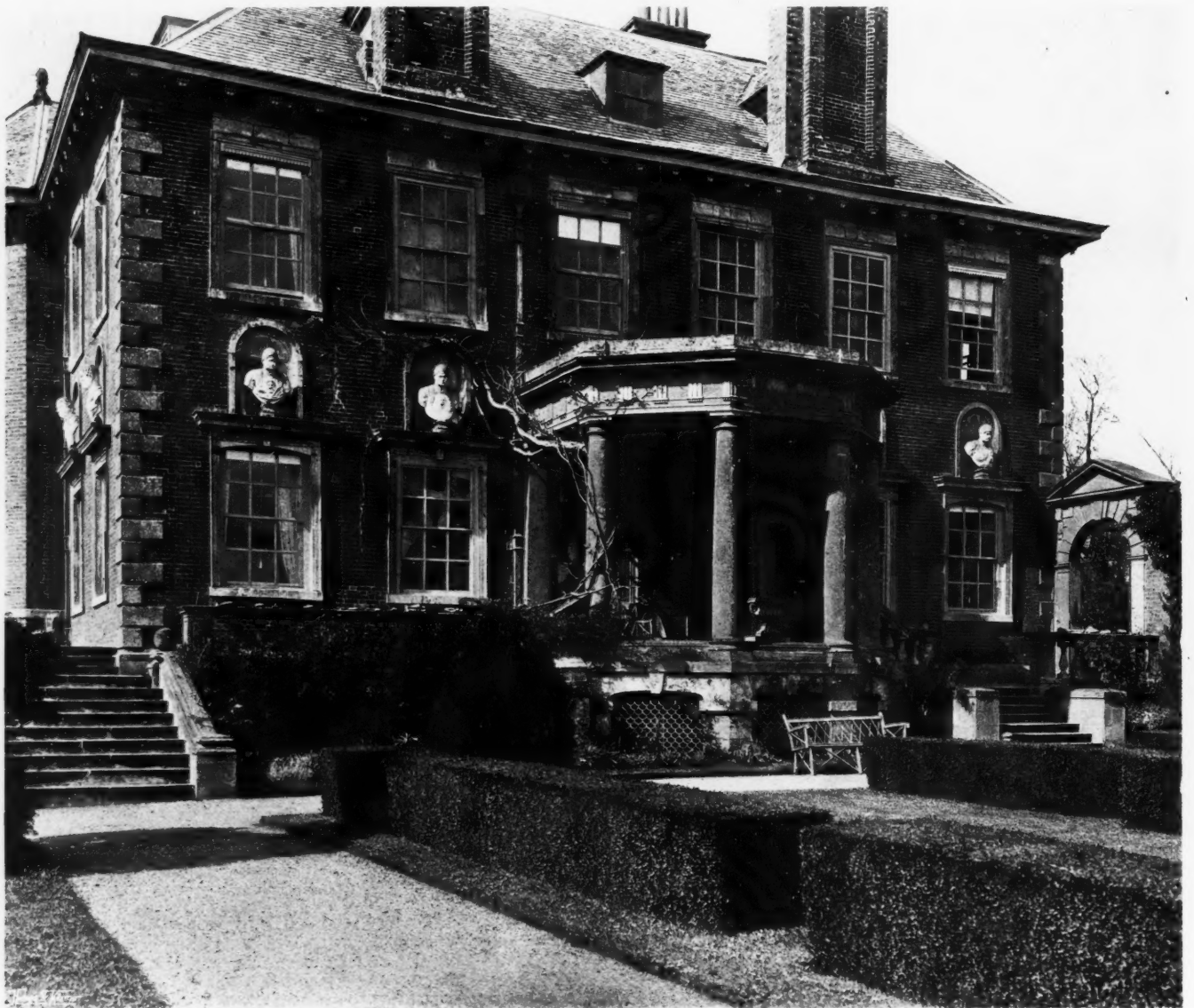
THE WISTARIA.



HONINGTON HALL is situated in Warwickshire, on its westward margin, and the river Stour, which flows by the park, there separates the county from that of Worcester, whose sylvan charms enter largely into the landscape. As all may see, the house possesses a very remarkable classic character, but we shall leave our readers to discover some of its unusual beauties while we discourse a little upon the history of the locality. Hereabout lay some of the broad lands of the Abbey of Coventry, granted to it by Earl Leofric in the reign of the Confessor, and the place is called Hunitone in Domesday. The tenants of the monks had their holdings by the rendering of certain services, mostly from the feast of St. John Baptist to Michaelmas. Each was to mow with one man for a day and a-half, and to carry the hay out of the lord's meadow. In return, the tenants were to have "one mutton," or eightpence, with eight loaves of bread, and a cheese, as also fourpence in money. They were to come to the "lord's

reap," with their families, except their wives, and to reap a certain quantity, and carry away the grain; they were likewise to plough four times in the year, and to harrow, and were to give ten eggs and a penny for every alehouse, and to repair the lord's pool as often as it should require it. They were to pay to the lord 17s. 4d. for "antient aid," and 3s. 4d. per annum for the carriage of fish, as also 6s. 8d. for the maintenance of his corn-cart. Every two "yard land" made its tenant liable to the service of carrying one load of wood from Packwood, and no tenant might sell his horse-colt without licence of the lord. The sixteen cottiers of Honington were not so heavily burdened, but each of them rendered four hens, one cock, and five eggs, which they were to carry to Coventry.

Such was the nature of the agricultural polity of the overlord and the tenancy of the people which gave its measure of settled order and prosperity to the country in the days of the monks of Coventry. When the rapacious hand of Henry VIII. was laid



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IN THE SPRING OF THE YEAR.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

upon their possessions Honington was sold for what, in our money, would be the very large sum of £786 7s. 6d. to Robert Gybbes, gentleman, who was to hold in capite by the tenth part of a knight's fee, and to pay annually the sum of £4 7s. 4d. to the King. From this possessor descended Sir Ralph Gybbes, and

the family possessed the estate in 1640, having evidently some kind of house upon the site, of which every vestige has probably perished, though its old deer park lodge, and a granary, now in the courtyard, still remain from the reign of Elizabeth or James I. Two years later, in 1642, the property passed, by sale,

to the builder of the present house, Henry Parker, Esq., father of Sir Henry Parker, Bart. By that time the old form of house was almost lost in the new mansions of England. The quadrangle and the E and H forms had vanished, and the genius of Inigo Jones had infused a large measure of the classic spirit into our domestic architecture, giving greater importance to the living-rooms, and relegating the hall and staircase almost to the position they hold to-day; whence came a general tendency to adopt the rectangular block plan for the dwelling-places of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Honington Hall did not receive its final form in the reign of Charles II. It passed into the possession, somewhat later, of Mr. Joseph Townsend, ancestor of the present owner, a gentleman who represented Wallingford in Parliament, and married Judith, daughter and heiress of Mr. John Gore of Bush Hill, Middlesex, third son of Sir William Gore, M.P., of



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FROM THE WEST TERRACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Tring Park, Herts. Mr. Townsend considerably improved the house, greatly beautifying it, and adding the exceedingly handsome octagonal room, which measures 30ft. from side to side, and is 30ft. high. In the simple stately dignity of the structure externally, the hue of its old red brick and stone facias, its broad masses, and the fancy displayed in its details, it presents a very notable example of the domestic architecture of the time. The balustraded terrace on the south-east with the Ionic garden portico, and the round-arched door at the end, surmounted by a pediment and radiantly garlanded, is admirable. So, too, the delightful entrance on the north-east, with its Corinthian columns, its interrupted curvilinear pediment, and its shield of the Townsend arms. Here, again, is an archway leading on the right through to the kitchen wing, and a beautiful stone-work screen curves out from the building on that side, with round-topped niches between pilasters, and a frieze above handsomely adorned with triglyphs and metopes, and the whole crowned with an elegant balustrade, while in the centre is a graceful pediment. Nothing is quite so distinctive in the design as the busts of Roman emperors boldly sculptured in the roundels between the two ranges of windows. The love for the histories and fables of old Rome, and for the



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THE FOUNTAIN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

actors in the great imperial drama which had set a pattern to the great powers of the subsequent world, had taken root in England long before, and it began to be expressed in our domestic buildings when the Italian terra-cotta workers came in the company of Torregiano, and when Giovanni da Majano provided those imperial busts which are in the entrance tower of



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THE NORTH WING.

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HONINGTON HALL.

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THE SOUTH-EAST FRONT.

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THE STABLES.

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Hampton Court. We remember how Evelyn, in July, 1654, described the lime-tree walks, and the court and fountain of the stables at Wilton, as adorned with the heads of the Cæsars, and in several of our old gardens there are terminal busts of Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, and their successors in the imperial purple. Perhaps nowhere, however, do the Cæsars stand so prominently and boldly as in the roundels of Honington Hall.

The classic character is preserved also internally, as may be seen by the pictures. The hall is well proportioned, and is 30ft. in length, with marble floor, and enriched by bas-reliefs on walls and ceiling, and a fine carved mantel-piece. The dining-room, which is 34ft. long, opens upon the portico. More remarkable still is the splendid octagonal room which has been alluded to, added by Mr. Joseph Townsend, its walls much enriched with classic decoration, and representations of the four seasons of the year in the alternate angles. In the midst hangs a gilt chandelier,



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THE SUNDIAL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

while above rises the dome adorned with octagonal coffered panels and a painting in oils of "Venus Rising from the Sea," by Luca Giordano. The house is also adorned with a valuable collection of pictures, many of them by great masters, which Mr. Townsend collected. That gentleman was succeeded at Honington by his only son, Mr. Gore Townsend, who married Elizabeth, second daughter of the fourth Earl of Plymouth, and from him Mr. Frederick Townsend, the present owner, is descended.

It remains now to speak of the surroundings of the mansion, which add no little to the satisfaction with which we view the structure. The park, which covers nearly 200 acres, is finely wooded, in particular by many noble elms, and here in former times a small herd of deer was maintained. The river Stour flows on the west and south of the house, entering into the landscape, while the park extends mainly on the other side. The church of All Saints' is also near, and its fine tower is a feature



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THE TEMPLE.

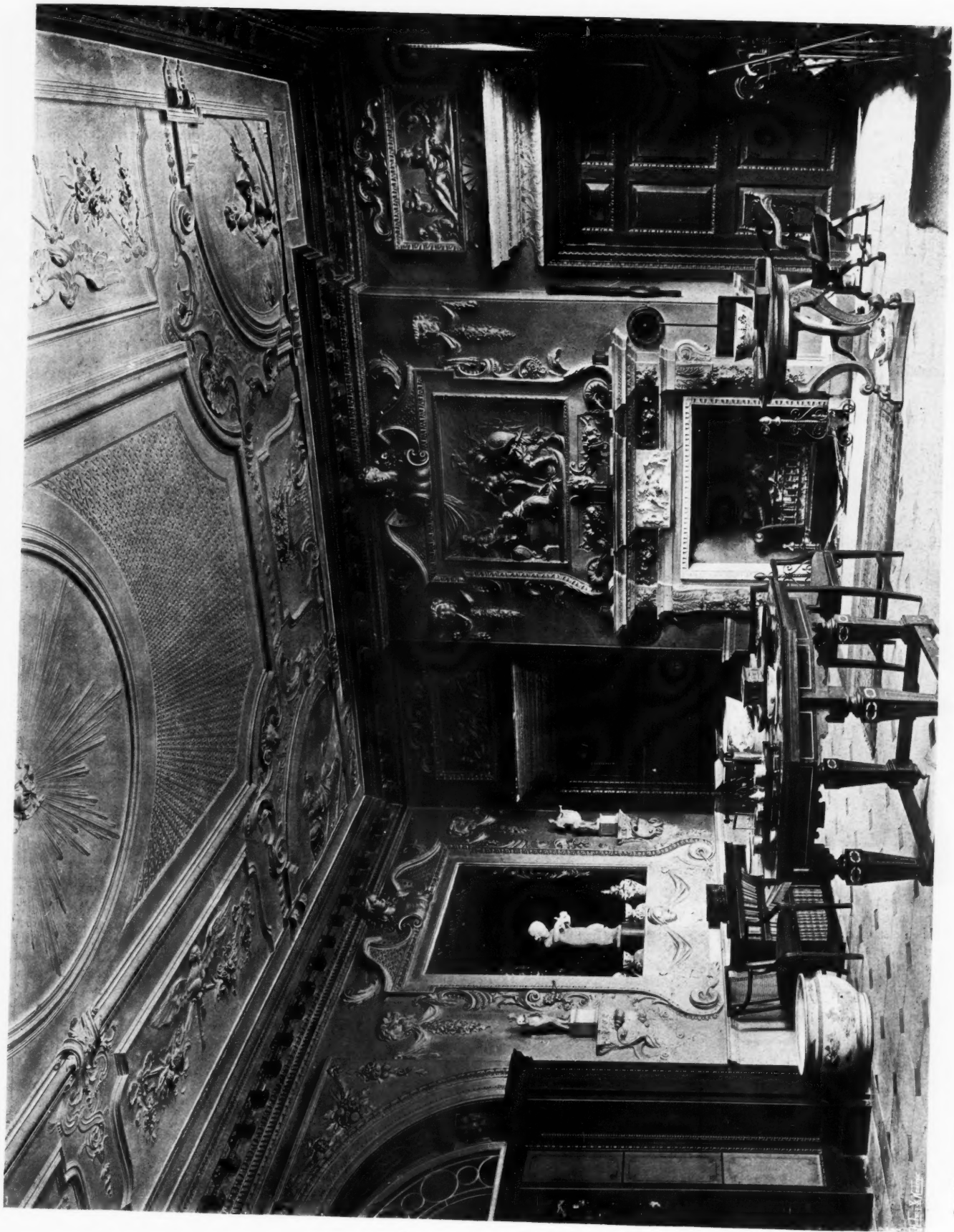
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SECTION OF THE OCTAGON ROOM.

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THE ENTRANCE HALL.

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of considerable importance, and the only ancient part of the edifice, the rest having been rebuilt in the classic style at the end of the seventeenth century. There are memorials of the Parkers and Townsends within.

The gardens are the foreground to the beautiful landscapes. Fronting the south side is a formal rectangular arrangement, with a fountain in the midst, of low, square-topped, dense yew hedges defining the four walks which diverge from it. The principal feature of the further garden is the profusion of hardy perennials, with a constant succession of interesting flowers, which brighten the beds from spring to autumn, and two rockeries of alpine which flourish here as well as in their mountain homes. It is all simple and satisfactory, without deficiency or exaggeration, and beyond are fine coniferous trees, and tall elms with a rookery. Extending our survey, we find other formal arrangements in the same spirit, but with lower edgings, and there is a classic temple with Doric columns, a frieze with triglyphs and metopes and a pediment; this building affords a pleasant open-air but sheltered summer and winter resort which is very popular. In every direction there are green lawns and landscape backgrounds of that peaceful type which we associate much with Middle England, and on the east is a wide outlook through the park, and an avenue which is seen in one of the pictures, with the quaint old octagonal dovecote and sundial. The old buildings of the courtyard, which have been mentioned, are exceedingly interesting. Mark the character of the granary and stables, with the broad gateway flanked by those lofty Ionic fluted pilasters with their spiked terminals, and the tall gable with the gracefully-sculptured figure in the niche. Extremely quaint and

The Agricultural Returns do not, of course, distinguish the particular fruit trees which go to form the orchards of which they show the extent, but it is a fairly safe assumption that the 52,000 acres in Devon and Somerset, and the 69,000 acres in Hereford, Worcester, and Gloucester, returned as "Orchards," represent approximately the area devoted to the production of cider in Great Britain. No doubt apple orchards are found and cider is made in other counties than these, as, for example, in Norfolk, but neither the trees nor the industry are native to the soil, as they are in the five counties just mentioned.

Although for long centuries beer has been counted the national beverage of the majority of Englishmen, there has always been a minority of cider-drinkers. No doubt with our hard-drinking forebears the lighter liquor—where choice was possible—was sorely handicapped in the competition for public favour. A "carousal" does not suggest itself so readily with cider as with beer, although presumably it is equally possible. But when tastes and manners changed, and heavy drinking went out of fashion, it might have been expected that malt liquor would have been superseded in favour by the "wine of the country"—the juice of the apple. Probably this would have happened if the manufacture of cider had been in the hands of a commercial oligarchy as enlightened and enterprising as that of beer. The brewing interest was alert to mark, and meet, the change in public taste, and everything that scientific knowledge and trade organisation could accomplish was speedily brought into play, with the result that lighter and brighter liquors, such as consumers demanded, were forthcoming. Cider-makers, on the other hand, kept in the old individualist haphazard grooves, in

which the production of a palatable beverage was largely a matter of luck, and the failure of an output was regarded as a misfortune for which there was no help. Had the makers of cider been as alert as the brewers, they might have met at once the demand which arose for lighter and less "heady" beverages, and they might have provided a sound and wholesome alternative to the thin, and sometimes it is to be feared sophisticated, hocks and clarets of Germany and France, which have come so largely into general consumption.

A stern chase is a long one, and it is proverbially difficult to overtake a neglected opportunity; but for some years now a determined effort has been made to induce cider-makers to bring their methods both of manufacture and of trade organisation into some better relation with modern conditions.

Under the old time - honoured system the apples were ground with all the dirt and leaves attaching to them, and without any attempt to remove unsound or decayed fruit. Now, by the use of a long sloping trough with an open lath bottom, along which the apples roll into the mill, most of the rubbish is sifted out, and the

rotten apples are removed by a boy as they pass along the trough. The ground apples, or "pomace," were formerly made into a "cheese" with straw, technically known as "reed"; now cloths are employed, which are cleaner and more convenient. The thick juice ran from the press into barrels, and was there left to ferment, and at some time or other the barrels were bunged down. After a while they were spiled and sampled, and, as an expert writer on the subject observes, "some of the cider would be sweet, some would be dry, some would be sour; a really good cider was an exception, and why a particular barrel was good nobody could tell."

Within the past ten years, however, a change has occurred which bids fair to effect a complete revolution in the cider industry. Experiments have been systematically carried out since 1893, largely at the instance of Mr. Neville Grenville, under the auspices and with the financial support of the Bath and West of England Society and the Board of Agriculture. The movement has recently culminated in the establishment of a National Fruit and Cider Institute near Bristol, which is supported by grants from the Board of Agriculture, the Bath and West of England Society, and the county councils of Devon, Gloucester, Hereford, Somerset, Worcester, and Monmouth. The institute is established for the prosecution of enquiries and experiments to determine "the best methods of cultivation of all kinds of fruit and vegetables, their habits of growth and leading characteristics, the best and most suitable varieties for all purposes; but as regards fruit, with special reference to the manufacture of cider and perry." Investigations and demonstrations are also to be conducted in



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THE DOVECOIE.

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picturesque is the aspect of these antique buildings, which represent the older house of Honington. Much wealth and no little taste of the instructed kind were in Middle England in the times when Honington Hall was originally built, and we may see that its successor has a singularly attractive and unusual character. Standing in its beautiful gardens and its sylvan park, with the placid Stour and the old church for its neighbours, it holds a notable place among the many fine houses of Warwickshire.

THE WINE OF THE COUNTRY.

WHEN the apple trees burst into beauty the heart of the West Countryman swells with a home-sick sigh. A vision of the "island valley of Avilion," lying

"Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,"

or of slumbering Devonshire combs, rises before his eyes. He who has once seen the fragile glory of the apple orchards during the brief period when the blossom seems to clothe the country-side as with a fairy veil, can never lose the memory; but he who was bred in a cider county has the spring splendours woven in the texture of his mind. By what fortuitous combination of favourable conditions it came about that two well-marked districts of the country should have become the home of the cider industry it is unnecessary now to enquire. Soil, climate, situation, all alike had a determining influence. But whatever the reason, the concentration of apple orchards in five counties is remarkable.

the best methods for the utilisation of fruit and vegetables, and especially with reference to the manufacture of cider, perry, and kindred liquors. On the land attached to the institute it is intended to test the relative merits of different varieties of apples, and also the most advantageous methods of cultivating them. For example, two systems are being tested, viz., the Herefordshire system, whereby a tree grafted with the particular variety desired is planted straightaway (the disadvantage being that the particular variety used may not necessarily make a good standard tree), and the Somerset system, whereby a stock worked at the bottom with a variety which is known to make a good standard is planted, and when the head is sufficiently grown, grafted with the cider variety desired (the disadvantage being a loss of some time at the beginning). Experiments will be made as regards the most profitable amount of ground round the stems to be left bare for the first six or eight years, and also as regards different methods of fencing against stock. The indoor work embraces scientific research into the diverse, and at present in many cases obscure, causes which determine the excellence, or the reverse, of cider and perry, and the most

satisfactory mode of dealing with these products at every stage of their manufacture. There is good reason to believe, therefore, that the indifference and neglect which have so long hindered the development of one of the most important and characteristic branches of British agriculture are disappearing, and that "the wine of the country" will eventually take that place in popular esteem to which, when properly made, its merits entitle it. Of course, the manufacture of a uniformly sound and reliable article is, after all, only the first step, and there still remains the necessity of organising the trade and securing a regular market. Private enterprise must naturally be relied upon in the main for this object, and individuals have already secured fairly satisfactory results. But this is only possible in exceptional cases, where a combination of capital and commercial aptitude are available. For the rank and file, co-operation in some form is essential. The best form this can take is not easy to decide, and may perhaps differ according to local conditions. But it is probable that the factory system may be adapted to the cider industry in some modified form analogous to that in which it has been applied to butter and jam.

R. H. R.

ASCOT WEEK.

AS compensation for a most unpleasant week's racing at Epsom we have had a truly Royal Ascot, thoroughly enjoyable from every point of view, except, perhaps, that of backers who have not known how to win the fickle smiles of Fortune. What more can one want for such a meeting—fine weather, first-class racing, with one or two highly-sensational results, crowds of all that is fairest and best and bravest in this merry England of ours gracing the meeting with their presence, our King and Queen driving up the broad green track in stately magnificence, secure among the respectfully affectionate greetings of their subjects? These things are English, and appeal to English hearts. There is no day of the four days' racing at Ascot without its special feature of interest.

Tuesday, the opening day, saw the decision of the Coventry Stakes, and I cannot help thinking that in Cicero, the winner of it, we saw the victor of next year's Derby if all goes well. He is a really beautiful colt, full of quality, with a good deal of likeness to his sire, Cyllene, but standing on rather better limbs, while the manner in which he won his race directly he was asked to do so reminded one of the characteristic performances of his brilliant sire. Jarvis rode a good race on Grey Plume in the Trial Stakes. The Gold Vase gave backers their first hint of coming disasters, when the "red-hot" good thing, Hands Down, having fought out a stern battle with Hammerkop, was tackled and beaten by Bachelor's Button, who was brought up with an irresistible dash by that fine horseman Halsey. Twenty-two runners faced the starter for the Ascot Stakes, and Mr. G. Miller provided a very genuine surprise by winning the race with Merry Andrew, who started at 20 to 1. Well,



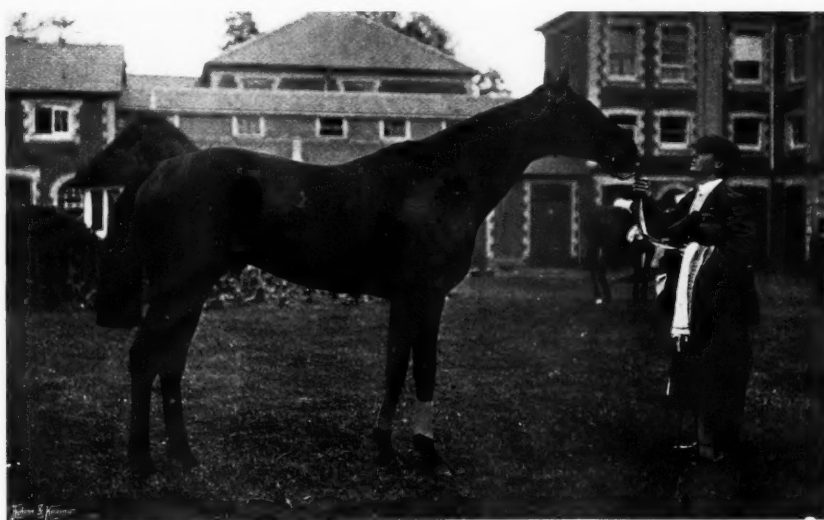
W. A. Rouch.

THE FINISH OF THE ROYAL HUNT CUP.

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it was bad for backers, no doubt, but, after all, there was consolation in the fact that the winner was owned and trained by a good polo player and a good sportsman. The Forty-seventh Ascot Biennial Stakes might have provided another sort of sensation if it had not been run at Ascot, and if the owner of the second horse had been another sort of owner than Sir J. Thursby, inasmuch as the race was won by Brother Bill, one of the horses lately the property of Mr. R. S. Sievier, and concerning the qualification of which by the ruling of the Jockey Club much doubt exists. Rydal Head and Exchequer won the two remaining events, quite in accordance with their position in the betting.

On Wednesday morning there were all sorts of rumours in the air concerning the candidates for the Royal Hunt Cup, and the puzzle of finding the winner became more difficult of solution than ever. Melayr, a hot favourite, beat an ignominious retreat in the betting; Csardas, with 7st. 5lb., looked a good thing if he was all right, and when he made his appearance it did not need much acumen to see that he stripped a credit to his trainer, full of muscle and bloom, but there were half-a-dozen owners and trainers at least who would have it that "you had better have a bit on mine." But the issue was not long in doubt when the twenty-eight runners had been despatched upon their journey. Csardas had his race won before the distance, and passed the winning-post a good length and a-half in front of Hazafi, who ran much better than recent reports led anyone to expect he would. In the Coronation Stakes, Pretty Polly made hacks of her opponents, of course; but what a beautiful mare she has grown into! Her somewhat chubby and cobby appearance has disappeared, and she has fine-d down into a most exquisitely shaped and proportioned specimen of a thorough-bred. It is a rather curious habit, by the way, that she has of changing her leg during a race in which she is not even galloping. I wonder if anyone has noticed it. I know one trainer did, and took it



W. A. Rouch.

CSARDAS, WINNER OF THE ROYAL HUNT CUP.

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for a sign that she had gone far enough for her liking, but I think he is quite mistaken. It was quite a sight to see her, with Lane sitting on her back with a loose rein, picking her way out of the paddock on to the race-course, and looking at the people as she passed them; and so it was to see her munching bits of sugar from Mr. Gilpin's hand after the race. She evidently enjoyed the sugar, but I think regretted much that Mrs. Gilpin was not there to greet her. Pretty Polly's victory had evidently brought luck to Mr. Gilpin, for Delaunay, formerly known as the Pet colt, won him the Fern Hill Stakes in a canter, and Mr. Neumann's Petit Bleu took the Fifty-second Triennial Stakes to the same stable, giving W. Lane his fourth winning ride for the day.

Thursday, of course, was Cup Day, and I doubt if a more perfect Cup Day or a more crowded and representative gathering has ever been seen at Ascot. There are people who say that English women do not know how to dress, but the Royal Enclosure was full of the most beautifully-dressed ladies.

No mere man dare attempt to describe a lady's costume, but there is something in the fresh, clear complexion, and free, graceful carriage of our countrywomen that I think will challenge comparison with all others; and there they were, lending something of their own grace and refinement to a typically English day. Of course, they all wanted to back that beautiful mare Sceptre, and I am afraid many of them did so. If for nothing else, this year's Ascot will always be memorable for the race for the Gold Cup: Only four horses, Zinfandel, Sceptre, Maximum II., and Throwaway; 5 to 4 on Zinfandel, 7 to 4 against Sceptre, and 20 to 1 against Throwaway. What



W. A. Rouch.

IN THE PADDOCK.

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Morny Cannon on Zinfandel and Otto Madden on Sceptre were doing is best known to themselves; the only conclusion I can

come to is that Cannon, who had often ridden Throwaway, considered him to be so bad that he need not bother about him at all, and messed his horse about for fear of Sceptre. Lane jumped off with Throwaway, and maintained his lead up to the junction of the courses, where, taking a pull at his horse, the others thought he was coming back to them, and Sceptre, drawing up to him, led by about half a length in making the line for home. You can give away weight in racing far more easily than you can give distance, and the ground that Sceptre and Zinfandel had to make up told its tale.



W. A. Rouch.

THE RACE FOR THE GOLD VASE.

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Throwaway was not done with, and, amid tremendous excitement, stalled off a late challenge from Zinfandel and won by a

good length. Brains tell in everything, and it was W. Lane's brains, added to his fine horsemanship, that won the coveted Gold Cup for that good sportsman Mr. F. Alexander. Previous to the Gold Cup, the All-Aged Stakes had provided a sensational episode, owing to the disqualification of Cossack for carrying insufficient weight. With only two runners, this was a cruel blow to the bold punters who had laid odds of 4 to 1 on Cossack. His only opponent, Orchid, had no intention whatever of winning the race, and when Jones did give him a hint with the whip he half turned round, and tried to grab his rider's leg. I do not know who is to blame for the insufficient weight carried by Cossack, but it is a very reprehensible sort of carelessness—that is the least one can say about it. Mr. Neumann won the New Stakes by the aid of Llangibby and W. Lane, but there was a filly behind them who, I think, will finish in front of them another day—the Duke of Devonshire's



Rouch. MR. F. ALEXANDER LEADS IN THE WINNER OF THE GOLD CUP. Copyright

filly by Flying Fox out of Lady Villikins; she got off very badly, and ran rather green on this occasion, but is quite a good one, I think, and well worth following. Grey Plume won another race for the Duke of Westminster, the Forty-first New Biennial Stakes, and Santry, another of W. Lane's mounts, won the Forty-second New Biennial Stakes for Lord Carnarvon.

A smaller attendance and smaller fields were the features of Friday's racing, but the sensational character of this year's Ascot was maintained right up to the end. Sir J. Miller's Pharisee, starting at 100 to 8, won the first event, the Ascot High-Weight Stakes. Zinfandel, this time allowed to stride out and run his race truly, won the Alexandra Plate in a hack canter. The Wokingham Stakes provided the biggest field of the meeting, and again the favourites went down. Morny Cannon on Out o' Sight showed us what a fine jockey he really is when he is himself, by riding a really beautiful race on the winner. Then came the valuable Hardwicke Stakes, and oh! the pity of it that Sceptre should have been pulled out again to face the starter and be ignominiously beaten; but so it was, and not only did Rock Sand, who a short time ago would not go with her at all, win the race in a canter, but even Santry finished in front of her. Sundridge carried Morny Cannon first past the post in the King's Stand Plate, and the last race of the meeting, the Fifty-first Triennial Stakes, came very near furnishing another sensational disaster. With odds of 5 to 2 laid on him, it was only by the shortest of heads that Henry the First and Otto Madden pulled through, after a desperate finish with Captain Laing's Antonio, ridden by Halsey.

B. H.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

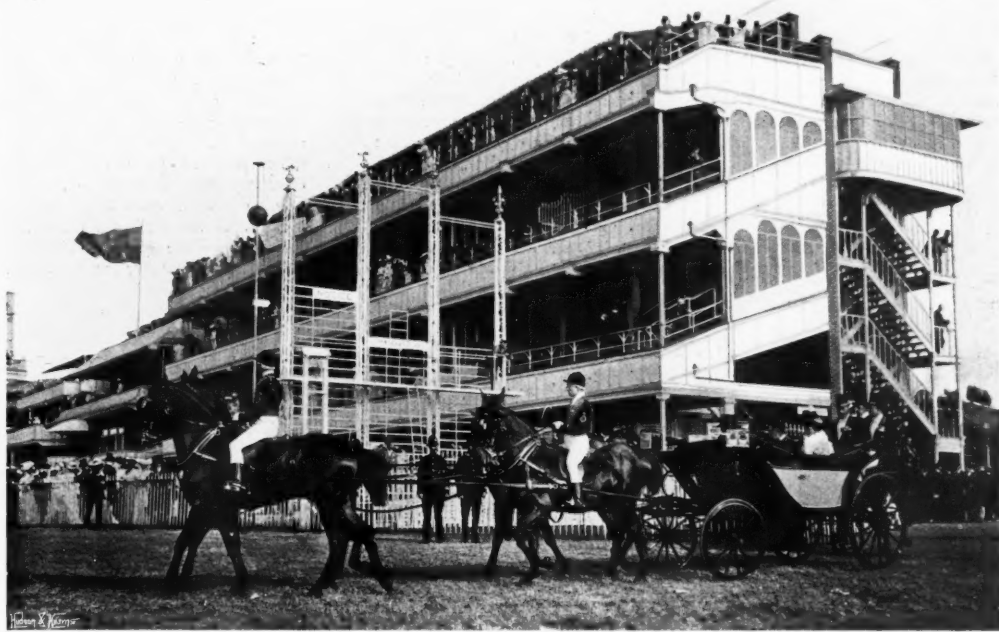
THE AVENGING OWL.

AN Anglo-Indian writer has recorded as the crowning virtue of the owl in India that it garrottes green parrots at night; and I confess to the same sort of sentiment towards the brown owl which visits our sparrow-haunted shrubbery every evening. To the owner of a garden, the green parrot in India and the sparrow in England have a good deal in common, in the matter of noise, mischief, cunning, and impudence; and in view of the profuse multiplication of sparrows

sparrows, in the same way that the multiplication of rats in rural districts may be attributed mainly to the persecution of barn owls.

USES OF WHITE AND DARK PLUMAGE.

Though neither of the owls mentioned is particular as to diet, each keeps, as a rule, to its own line of hunting, the white or barn owl preying chiefly upon fur, and the brown or wood owl upon feather. Their very colour tells you this; for the dark plumage of the brown owl among the dark foliage



W. A. Rouch. THE KING AND QUEEN LEAVING AFTER THE RACES.

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cleats the imperfect sight of the roosting day-birds; while the whiteness of the barn owl is adapted to render it inconspicuous against the light sky, when it drops silently as a feather upon the sharp-sighted little animals of the night. Indeed, in the snowy under-side of the barn owl we see the same process of selection which has made almost all birds that hunt fish pure white underneath. They are thus rendered less conspicuous to the fish looking upwards; while you can almost tell also at a glance whether a bird is accustomed to chase fish under water by diving and swimming, because in that case the back is as markedly dark as the under-side is light. This renders the bird almost invisible when swimming up to a fish from below, and accounts no doubt for the curious similarity in contrasting black-and-white plumage which characterises such birds as guillemots, razor-bills, puffins, etc. If rats and mice could fly, we may be sure that the barn owl would be dark above; but there is no need for this, because the upper side of a live owl is a thing which neither rat nor mouse ever sees.

DEAD SHREWS.

Some people put down to the owls the number of dead shrew-mice which begin to appear at this season on the paths, in shrubberies, and other open places near their haunts. For several reasons, however, I think that owls have nothing to do with it. In the first place, owls eat shrews readily, their pellets often containing more bones of these tiny animals than of any other creatures. On the other hand, most cats take pleasure in killing shrews, but will not eat them; and a cat's velvet paw is exactly the sort of weapon to leave the victims apparently uninjured in death, as are most of the shrews which are found. Sometimes, however, close examination will reveal a tiny speck of blood on the smooth fur; and this, again, is more likely to be produced by a cat's sharp claw than by an owl's talon or beak. Dead shrews are, moreover, very frequently left upon doorsteps or in verandahs in the country, and this would certainly seem to be the work of cats; while, if you take a dead shrew from a cat, it will usually seem quite as uninjured as those which lie about on the ground.

UNNATURAL "NATURAL" DEATH.

What makes this matter of dead shrews always interesting, however, is less the question whether owls or cats kill them, than whether they die a natural death. It is said to have been established beyond doubt that one very minute kind of foreign shrew is an "annual," in the same sense as the poppy or the sweet pea is an annual among plants, coming into existence, reproducing its kind, and dying within the year. If this is so, what would seem more natural than that any other kinds of shrews should exhibit a tendency in the same direction, and be liable to die after the breeding season? Here,



W. A. Rouch.

THE ROYAL ENCLOSURE AT ASCOT.

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which occurs every summer, it is pleasant to see the owl on noiseless wings hovering like some great moth above the evergreens where the mobs of young sparrows roost, every now and then plunging in to seize a sleeping victim. The young owls must live, and the more young sparrows they eat the better, before the army corps of sparrows make their annual descent upon the fields of ripening grain. It is probably to the gradual extinction of brown owls as much as to any other cause that we owe the increasing plague of

however, the difficulty is that the dead shrews are almost always in such excellent condition. In the case of an annual plant we can see the gradual process of decline which ends in death. Even a butterfly or moth gets worn and dull as its span of life draws to a close. Of longer-lived animals it is probable that few, if any, die what we call a "natural" death in a state of Nature. Indeed, death from old age and decrepitude would be the most "unnatural" of all in the animal world, though not so unnatural as that shrews should suddenly succumb in apparently the prime of life to some mysterious law of fatality which affects them alone.

A MURDEROUS MOUSE.

During life the shrew seems the last sort of creature to surrender its existence so tamely. Perhaps, in proportion to its size, it is the most ferocious and pugnacious animal known to science, not excluding the formidable fossa of Madagascar. The daily combats of shrews magnified to a 6ft. scale would be more than Homeric; and, if you have sharp ears, you can hear that anger predominates in their scolding protests against your presence in your own shrubbery. Why such tiny animals should have acquired such a swashbuckler spirit it is hard to guess; but bloodthirstiness often increases in Nature in inverse ratio to size. Yesterday, for instance, we turned over an old stump in the shrubbery, to "see what was underneath," and a wood mouse, or long-tailed field mouse as it is often called, bolted out of a nest of grass which filled a hollow under the stump. The nest, however, was that

of a field vole, or short-tailed field mouse as it is often called, and the blood-stained extremities of the owner were still there. All the middle parts of her had been devoured by the wood mouse, which fled when we moved the stump.

THE HABIT OF KILLING.

That a mouse should take advantage of its slightly superior strength and teeth to kill and eat a vole is not so curious, when one sees how thin a dividing line often separates the eater from the eaten. When a small centipede attacks and kills a—to him—huge worm; when a weasel brings down a large rabbit; or when a mongoose successfully tackles a five-foot cobra; we recognise the right of the professional slayer, properly equipped for the fray, to disregard the mere bulk of his victim. But when a duck eats chickens, or a thrush eats young robins, we see that the habit of killing has a wider scope than permits any easy division of animal life into creatures that prey or are preyed upon. A bad habit always "grows upon one"; it almost seems as if creatures who commence with the comparatively laudable slaughter of insects, are led on until their scope of murder is limited only by their strength. A hedgehog, devouring part of a sitting hen, and a mole, gorging himself upon blind baby rabbits, are surely cases in point; and perhaps in the shrikes we see birds now in transition between a useful insectivorous life and the bloodthirsty career of prey—midway in habit between the flycatcher and the hawk.

E. K. R.

THE ORNITHOLOGIST IN DENMARK.—II.

DENMARK is not, at present, a forest country, though, owing to the far-sighted policy of planting all her numerous barren and unproductive waste lands with spruce fir, another 100 years should supply her with thousands of acres of spruce forests. In every direction, especially along the bleak western coast, the "plantage" system is in full operation, on ground that otherwise would be perfectly useless, incapable of growing anything but marram-grass and stunted willow. Still, there are ancient forests of large trees, chiefly beech and fir, especially in some of the many islands which make up the kingdom of Denmark; and to one of these, armed with introductions to the proprietor, my friend I—and myself paid a short, but memorable, visit early in May, with the hope of seeing something of the larger raptorial birds believed by us to be still nesting in security in this remote and thinly-populated locality.

Calling at the house and leaving our cards, we hoped, with the introductions we had, to be accorded the freedom of the forest for a day or two, with perhaps a forester or gamekeeper as guide. But we had not reckoned on the warm welcome and hospitality which were accorded to us. Nothing would serve but that we should enter and have some dinner, while the carriage was ordered to the station for our luggage, after which we were to drive to the forest with the owner himself, and in the meantime we were to consider this our home for at least a week. This



R. B. Lodge. NEST OF THE BUZZARD.

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GIVING A BACK.

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could not be done, but two most enjoyable days were spent as guests in this most hospitable mansion. The forest is of large extent, and consists of deep valleys and hills covered mainly with beech, and interspersed here and there with spruce. Where exposed to the prevailing westerly winds, the trees are curiously stunted and flattened out along the hillsides in the direction of the wind, but in the sheltered valleys the trees, and particularly the beeches, grow to a great size, tall, straight, and stately. The ground beneath was thickly covered with a layer of last year's leaves, which rustled crisply beneath our feet, and set off the grey lichen and moss covered trunks and the tender greenery of the freshly opened leaves, making a most effective colour scheme for the landscape.

Before reaching the outskirts of the forest we had been interested in seeing a lapwing—bold in the defence of her eggs, or perhaps young—drive off a raven, in spite of his superior size and angry, barking protests; and a little further on we were delighted to see a buzzard leave a clump of trees which crowned a small knoll, within sight of the road. There was no nest, but our hopes were distinctly raised, and our prospects of a successful day became cheerful. The first nest seen was a last year's

nest of a kite, a huge mass of sticks, and not very far removed was a much smaller fresh nest of the same bird. But this nest had a very suspicious look about it. Leaning against the trunk halfway up was a felled fir tree, and on this could plainly be detected footmarks. It had evidently been robbed, and was not worth the trouble of ascending. And these big beech trees were more difficult to tackle than any trees of which I have had experience. Like all beeches, as soon as the branches could be reached it was easy to pull one's self up, but swarming up the straight trunks was quite another matter. Most of them were very large, and some impossible to clasp, but the special and unexpected difficulty lay in the covering of moss and lichen which clothed them. This came away under one's grasp, and made the climbing as difficult as the ascent of a greasy pole. But the great event of the day was the sight of the nest of a black stork, which we approached with the eager excitement befitting so great a rarity; for but a few pairs of this solitary bird breed, scattered over the most remote and secluded forest districts of Europe. Far out on the horizontal bough of a small beech, overhanging a hollow on the steep hillside, was the flat platform of sticks typical of the nest of this interesting bird. The interior of the nest was lined with masses of the soft green moss which grows abundantly in these woods, but there were, to our great disappointment, no eggs. This we accounted for at first by the supposition that the birds had been driven away by woodcutters who had been at work lopping and clearing away some trees blown down in the winter gales; but subsequent experience inclined us to the belief that this and other rare nests had been robbed to supply a dealer in Copenhagen, and that wholesale and systematic robbery had been going on for years unknown to the owner. His eyes are now, I am glad to say, opened to what has been happening in his forest, and the culprit has been



R. B. Lodge.

BLACK STORK'S NEST.

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identified. I only hope the owner will be able to stop the mischief before it is too late, otherwise the black storks in this interesting locality are doomed, restricted to the lives of the single pair of birds which inhabit it.

The sea-eagle, which not many years ago nested in Denmark is now almost exterminated, doubtless in the same manner, by the systematic robbery of its eggs year after year. On revisiting the forest the following day we were fortunate enough to see one of the black storks circling round and round over the valley. The huge black wings, grey breast, and the glint of red bill formed a most impressive picture as the great bird flapped slowly over the trees quite close to us. White storks I have seen by the hundred in Spain and Holland, and here in Denmark, where they are exceedingly common; but this was the first black stork ever seen in a wild state by either of us, and we watched its easy flight with the most intense interest. The same pair of birds had built another nest, this time in a much larger tree, and in a fork on the main stem; but this, too, was empty. Whether it had been robbed, or whether the birds had not yet laid again, I do not know—probably the latter. Hard by this second nest was that of a buzzard in an immense beech, which proved too much for our united efforts, though over an hour was spent in unavailing attempts to throw a rope over the second bough. Through the glass the tips of the green spruce twigs with which the buzzard lines her nest could be seen, and from the summit of an adjoining tree, which was easier to climb, two eggs at least could be seen. The following day we came again to this nest with some foresters, one of whom, who was evidently accustomed to the peculiarities of these trees, and could climb like a cat, ascended it and brought down three eggs. The whole time we were in the neighbourhood of this nest the buzzards sailed round in wide circles on their broad wings, occasionally settling in the



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A RUINED HOME.

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surrounding trees, and uttering incessantly their wild mewing cries, which resounded over the hillsides. Once, however, a goshawk, which also was apparently nesting somewhere near, sallied forth in pursuit, and with short and angry cries and impetuous dash fairly drove the two large birds away from the vicinity of their own nest. This goshawk's nest was afterwards found and visited, high up a big beech, but it also had been robbed of its single egg, which we were afterwards shown, and our desire to purchase it led to the information



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A GOSHAWK'S NEST.

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that it was destined for a Copenhagen dealer. Buzzards were fairly common; we saw at least five nests. No doubt they did not command the high prices of the more uncommon eggs, but even these had been taken in several cases. One nest I climbed to in a beech was empty, and the lining of once green spruce twigs, now half-withered, was fairly conclusive proof that the eggs had been taken, and were no doubt among a lot of buzzards' eggs we had seen at the home of our guide, the forester. Taking an occasional clutch of eggs in a district, after which the birds will lay again, is one thing, but this systematic looting of rare eggs year after year spells extermination, as it gives no possible chance for the birds to increase their number, or even to keep pace with the mortality. Over-

much greed in taking eggs in foreign countries by some English collectors has not tended to make it easier for those of more moderate desires to explore the nesting-places of Europe. In very many places I have taken no eggs at all, sometimes having been bound in honour not to do so, and all the eggs I brought out of Denmark were contained in one cigar-box and a hand-camera case. I must say, however, that in places I could mention, the natives, who take eggs themselves in a wholesale manner, are too apt to credit the English visitor with deeds, which either are grossly exaggerated, or have been perpetrated by themselves, and not by their visitors at all! The Englishman abroad often has enough sins of his own to answer for, without being credited with those he has never committed.

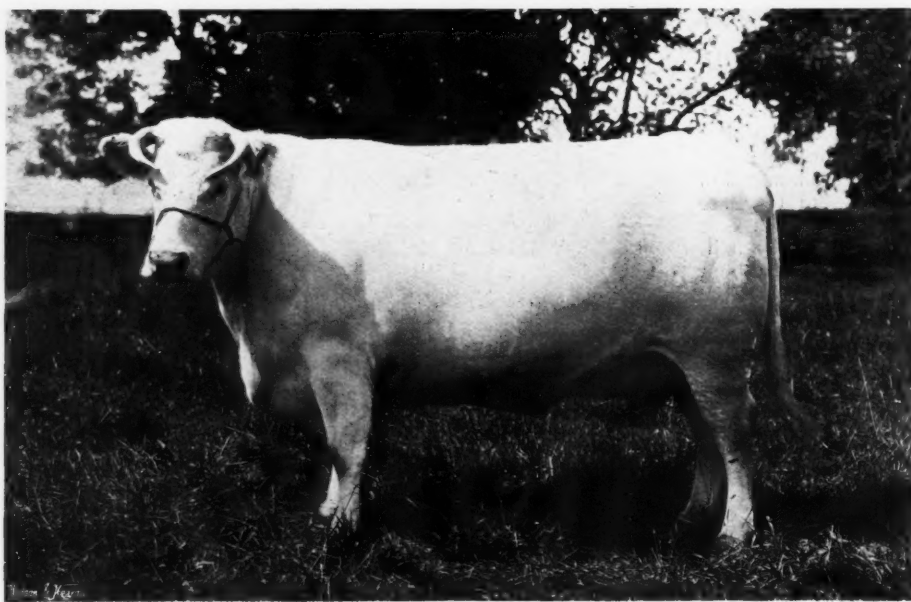
FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE SHOW.

SINCE the exigencies of an illustrated paper compel us to go to press on Tuesday night, it is not practicable to do more than describe the impressions produced by a hurried scamper round the exhibition of the Royal Agricultural Society on its opening day. Happily the exhibitors were favoured with much finer weather than they had last year, the day being warm and fair, although the sky was not clear. Park Royal, we think, will in time become quite a favourite resort, as it is very easily reached by the trains, which practically take one into the grounds, though perhaps when the Great Western becomes accustomed to these short runs it will perform them with more despatch. Inside the scene was both gay and interesting. In little, as it were, one had within a ring fence the agriculture of England, every portion of which was more or less adequately represented. At the time of our visit the Shires, wearied out perhaps by the exertions incidental to their being judged, for the most part stood sleepily in the sheds allotted to them; so did the Clydesdales, Suffolks, and other draught horses. As might be expected, there was a crowd always round the stall in which stood Lord Rothschild's crack, Blythwood Guelder Rose. The brown mare was in the very pink of condition, and did the greatest credit to those who had prepared her for the show. She is, perhaps, the best mare that has descended from that great sire Prince Harold, though she is not without a look of Hitchin Conqueror also. Among other Shires that had their awards fixed on the wall we noticed Intake Albert, a fine bay, belonging to Mr. Philo L. Mills, who also showed a brown filly full of quality, by Calwich Heirloom out of Hargate Bounce. Mr. Victor Cavendish once more scored with Holker Menestral 2nd, who is a living proof that Birdsall Menestral is as good at stud as he was in the showyard. We also fancy the bay stallion Souldern Scylax, with which Mr. Sutton-Nelthorpe carried off the prize given for stallions foaled in 1902. We must defer writing of the Clydesdales and Suffolks till next week, in the meantime contenting ourselves with a bird's-eye view of the cattle. The judges at the moment of our arrival were dealing with a large class of shorthorn bulls. It must have taken a long time to conclude the task, not only on account of the number, but because of the high merit of at least half-a-dozen competitors. In the cow class we were glad to see Mr. Deane Willis score once more with that exceptionally good shorthorn White Heather, who, although she was born on February 1st,

1898, held her own with the youngest competitors. King Edward VII., as is usual at the show of the Royal Agricultural Society, scored heavily. His Majesty sent upwards of thirty entries of horses, cattle, and sheep from Windsor and Sandringham, and with them he won six first prizes, five second prizes, four third prizes, and three reserve cards, besides eight or nine minor rewards. His Majesty also took champion prizes for the shorthorn bull Ronald, the Hereford bull Fire King, and Southdown rams. It is a very exceptional occurrence for one exhibitor to win three prizes for Southdowns. As these animals were nearly all bred and reared at Windsor, they speak eloquently of the care and judgment displayed in the establishment of the late Queen Victoria's herd, and also of the skill with which it has been carried on since her death. The number of visitors was not quite so large as might have been expected on the first day of the exhibition, as only 2,011 people paid to go in. This compares badly with the 2,685 visitors on the first day at Park Royal last year. In the year before that 2,321 paid for admission to the show at Carlisle, and at Cardiff in 1901 there were 3,155 visitors on the first day.

Among those who went down to see the show on Tuesday was the Alake, who must number amongst the more curious of the sights he has seen in England this immense agricultural show. He went down to the place in a very modern style—that is to say, he rode in a motor-car, and he seemed to derive great enjoyment from a tour of the different avenues. It would have been interesting to have had a conversation with him in regard to the impressions that the different sights made on his mind. We are so accustomed to the magnificent animals that have been produced by modern breeding, that we have ceased to pay them the tribute of due admiration, and the many ingenious implements by which in modern times the cultivation of the earth is carried on have come so gradually, that they too have ceased to excite any wonder, but for a man who is more or less a primitive to come and have all these things flashed on to his vision at once, must have been a revelation greater than the human mind could take in during the course of a short walk. At the other cattle we only had time to glance, without looking at the prize list. The Jerseys, as usual, were numerous, and of high quality. Most of the other breeds also were extremely well represented, although the entries were not quite so numerous as they were last year. We particularly liked the first prize Longhorn cow, belonging

to Mrs. Cheape of Bentley Manor, Redditch. The horns of this cow would make an excellent study for a painter. In the Aberdeen-Argus breed Mr. Cridlan and Mr. Hudson fought another bout in their long-drawn-out contest for supremacy. The Jerseys were not only many in number, but tip-top in quality, and must have given the judges a great deal of trouble to fix on the best. Ayrshires have distinctly gone out of fashion; there was no entry at all of bulls and only seven of cows. Highland cattle, too, seem to be rather out of favour, as no bull and only five cows were shown. A glance at the Keries, those shorthorns in miniature, suggested that breeders are still inclined to keep these cows large, whereas the original type was a small cow. If the Kerry were developed in size, it would be nothing more or less than a shorthorn. The sheep in their pens, particularly the Shropshires, Hampshire Downs, and Southdowns, looked very first-class indeed, though we cannot say that we greatly admired the demonstration of sheep shearing done by machinery which



WHITE HEATHER.

took place from time to time not far from their pens. It is not particularly quick, and we would like to be assured that it is as painless as shearing by hand. A day could easily have been spent among the machinery itself. We saw no absolute novelty, but an abundance of interesting contrivances. A single word might be added about the poultry exhibits. There are 117 classes, and the entries to them are fairly full, many beautiful birds being shown. Crowds collected round the places where some sort of action was taking place, as, for instance, in the case of judging harness and hackney horses, or where the dairymaids were churning cream, and we noticed that a vigilant eye was kept on the fire at which the blacksmiths were to have the shoeing competition. An interesting feature of the show is the Royal Pavilion, with its reception, dining, and retiring rooms. It faces the visitor on entering the show and does credit to Messrs. Shoolbred, who have decorated and furnished it.

AVINE WATCH-DOGS.

FOR a while after the geese saved the Capitol it is likely that the value of birds as watch-dogs (let the word pass, please, for the ease with which it is understood) was not underrated; but now that some time has gone by since Gauls thought of assaulting Rome, it seems as if avine merit and use for this purpose are less than justly appreciated. On a wild moorland the inhabitant of any lonely cottage is generally kept very fully informed, during the spring months, of the approach of any wayfarer, by the alarm cries of the nesting peewits that are almost ubiquitous in such places. If it be only the familiar shepherd and his dog that encroach on their domestic heath, they will follow the intruders for many hundred yards, making menacing flights above their heads and wailing out their shrill protestations all the while. Either dog or man alone is sufficient to rouse the outcry which gives notice to any who are within hearing and who understand even the first grammar of the many "calls of the wild," that an enemy is at the gate. At the door of many an English country cottage you will see a wicker cage suspended with a gaudily plumaged jay within its bars, and at your approach the bird will jump from perch to perch of its narrow prison, uttering the most raucous scolds. Keepers will tell you that they have often been apprised of the presence of poachers or more harmless trespassers in the coverts by the clamour of the jays; and though this is equivalent to a confession that they have permitted a certain number of what are commonly rated as "vermin" to survive in the preserves under their charge, they will perforce admit at the same time that they sometimes have been well served by the warning given them by these stealers of eggs. In justice, however, it is to be said that the opinion is becoming more and more general that most of the egg stealing of the jays is at the expense of the smaller, rather than of the game, birds, and the jay is not so universally seen nailed to the barn door with the other enemies of the game preserver, nor does the covert shooter so invariably, as of old, salute it with a charge of shot when for once in a way its usual cunning fails it, and it gives just the sufficient chance of a quick snap-shot as it flits over the tree-tops. Confinement in a cage does not by any means seem to modify the jay's natural sense of its duty to utter the loudest and harshest notes within its power—and its capacity for producing that effect is very considerable—whenever it perceives any strange being approaching, and many a cottager will tell you directly that the jay in the cage at the door is useful for this purpose. Others of the corvine tribe have some talent in the same line, but perhaps none of them is quite the equal of the jay. Some highly-trained parrots will even go a step further, and, reproducing the sounds that they have been taught to associate with the appearance of a certain object, will inform you, in a manner that appears most uncanny to those who do not understand how the lesson has been learned, whether the visitor that is approaching is a man or a woman. But this is an affair of special training, and just a little beside the present point. As a rule, in spite of the ancient legend of the geese (and it is to be remembered that the aquatic fowl are far more nocturnal in their habits than most of the rest), the birds are useful as daylight watchers and warners only. They have not the ready wakefulness of the dog, which makes him so invaluable. There are a few kinds, but again they are chiefly of the aquatic or the wading class, that will make night shrill, or raucous, with

their cries when a nocturnal visitor invades their haunts; but most of the land birds, when awakened at night, will draw very confused and sleepy heads from under—not their wings, but the long, soft feathers above the wing, and are occupied only with seeking, in silence, the nearest place of safe refuge to that in which they have been disturbed. There will be clamour enough, if you are at hand to hear it, when a fox invades your hen-roost, but the fox is not within the ordinary category of those visitors of whose approach you wish warning to be given. Of the visits of the "Thief of the World" all good fowls and dogs will give us such warning as they can.

CORRESPONDENCE.

RECORD PRICES FOR SHORTHORNS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—With reference to an enquiry as to record prices for shorthorns, the highest price ever paid was at Mr. S. Campbell's sale, New York Mills, U.S.A., September 16th, 1873, when the eighth Duchess of Geneva was sold for 8,120 guineas. The highest price in England was at the Earl of Dunmore's sale, August 25th, 1875, when Duke of Connaught was sold for 4,500 guineas.—C. L. BATES (Lieutenant-Colonel).

A LONG-LIVED OWL.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—After seventy-five years of captivity, a female eagle owl has just died in the aviaries of Mr. Meade Waldo. Brought from Norway in 1829, this bird within the last thirty years has reared no less than ninety young. Although the eagle owl is reputed to live to a great age, there appear to be but few recorded instances where the age could be definitely ascertained. A golden eagle which died at Vienna in 1719 was known to have been captured 104 years previously; and a falcon, of what species is not recorded, is said to have attained an age of 162 years. A white-headed vulture taken in 1705 died in the Zoological Gardens at Vienna in 1824, thus living 118 years in captivity.—W. P. FYCRAFT.

A YOUNG GOLDEN EAGLE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I was extremely sorry that I was not able to give you photographs of young eagles for your summer number, but, unfortunately, both the eyries I knew of were deserted. A few days ago, however, I was told of an eyrie containing a full-grown young golden eagle, so made all haste to go up; but, owing to a strong wind and bad light, the photographs were unsatisfactory, so I went up again, and, after a great deal of trouble, obtained the photograph I am sending you, and which I hope will not be too late for publication.



As the eaglet was so large, I had fears lest it should fly out of the eyrie; but although it spread its wings once or twice, it did not fly off.—SETON P. GORDON.

THE COLOUR OF BIRDS' EGGS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Lately there died at Nairn a very remarkable man, to whose memory you paid due honour in your columns—Mr. Ferguson, one of the best field naturalists in the country, and the possessor of one of the finest private collections of British birds' eggs in the kingdom. One of the theories that he held most strongly is not very well known, and certainly not at all recog-

nised by oologists generally. It was that any bird, no matter what the normal colour of its eggs may be, will lay a blue egg or eggs in a certain slightly morbid condition of the ovaries. It would be most interesting if other oologists would give us their opinion, or the results of any experience, on this subject. It is a well-known fact that the third annual clutch of the green woodpecker's eggs have a distinctly bluish tinge that is quite different from the strikingly white aspect of the first clutch. The bluish tint in some specimens of the guillemot's eggs may be noticed in the same connection. It is possible that the theory may have some bearing, if it be accepted, on the blue eggs laid by the cuckoo, although it does not seem to touch the very remarkable fact that the cuckoo's egg in a redstart's nest is almost always blue, but in a hedge-sparrow's nest, where the eggs of the builder are no less blue, is almost always grey. As I understood Mr. Fergusson's theory, it was that if you could induce a bird of any species to go on laying long enough, by taking away its eggs judiciously, you would find the eggs gradually losing their normal colouration, growing gradually paler (and so far, I think, all oologists will be in agreement with him), and finally, if the bird could be induced to continue laying long enough, assuming a more and more pronounced ground tint of blue. In any case, the theory of a naturalist who formed all his opinions so absolutely at first hand from Nature must be distinctly worthy of attention, even if it is not to be accepted.—HORACE G. HUTCHINSON.

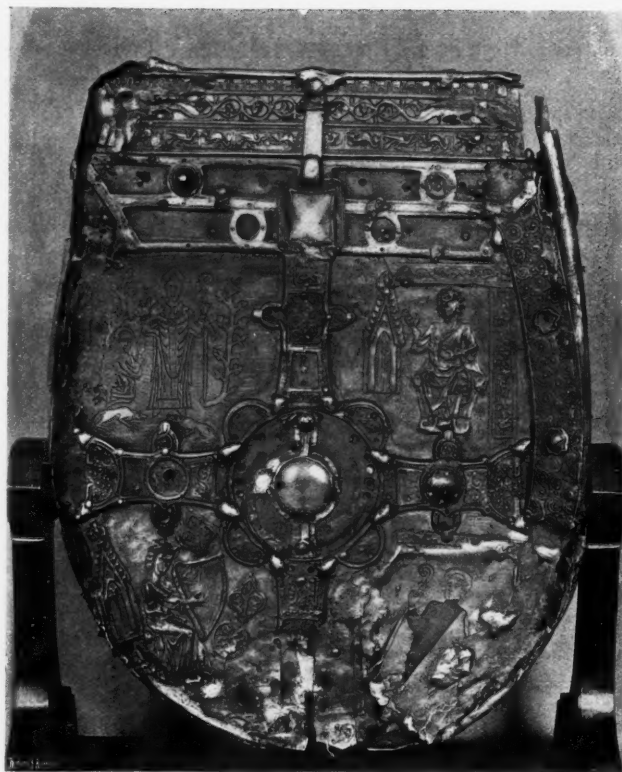
FIACAIL PHADRING.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]



REVERSE SIDE.

SIR,—In the accompanying picture you will see a beautiful specimen of early Christian art in Ireland. It is the representation of a case, or shrine, made towards the middle of the fourteenth century, to contain the tooth of St. Patrick which is said to have become loose and fallen from his mouth upon the sill of St. Brone's Church, in the county of Sligo. Shrines appear to have been somewhat of a peculiarity of the country, and not uncommon from the tenth century onwards. There are still extant some six examples of bell shrines, in which were preserved, with superstitious reverence, the roughly constructed hand-bells distributed throughout the numerous oratories founded by St. Patrick for the purpose of calling the faithful to worship. In no other branch of the Christian Church were similar covers or shrines known. Book shrines, "cundachs," seem also to have been a rarity outside Ireland; but



REVERSE SIDE.

judging by the number whose history has been traced, and by those that yet remain, the custom of preserving books in these delicately ornamented boxes prevailed in Ireland from the ninth to the sixteenth centuries. These reliquaries varied in size from 9½ in. to 5½ in. in length, and were, with one exception, composed of finely-worked metal. They were held sacred, and used as charms, one belonging to the Tirconnells being worn like a breast-plate and carried before the chieftain to battle. The exquisite tracery and intricate scroll decoration found on nearly all the shrines handed down to us, prove that the Irish metal-workers of this early period were no mean adepts in the art. Fiaccail Phadring, or the Shrine of St. Patrick, could it revert to its original state of perfection, might compare with advantage with many a product of the present day.—EDITH BROUGHTON.

"POOR WAT."

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—You may consider the accompanying photograph worthy of a place in the pages of COUNTRY LIFE. It is seldom the fortune of a photographer to secure the portrait of a wild hare, and the attitude of the animal shows that he has already taken alarm, and that not a moment is to be lost in exposing the plate. His fore legs appear to be unnaturally long, but that is because he is crouched ready to bound away in an instant, and his long, powerful hind legs are tucked up well under him. There is something of mystery about the hare that has led to innumerable superstitions concerning it. It was believed to be the favourite form a witch assumed in order to evade her pursuers, and in this disguise lead had no effect on her, and unless the gun was loaded with a silver sixpence it was of no avail against her. Then, again, we have the familiar saying "as mad as a March hare"; for this, however,



A WILD HARE.

there is a certain amount of ground, as at that season hares are mating, and their behaviour during courtship is decidedly peculiar, and their antics are fantastic in the extreme. The common names given to the hare, however, show that sentiment was not entirely against it. Puss and Poor Wat, as it is known in the North, seem to indicate that hares have always enjoyed a little human sympathy, probably on account of the persistent way in which they have been hunted from time out of memory. It is noticeable, too, that her hunters always refer to the hare in the feminine gender, a sure token that "she" is not regarded in quite the same way as that "Thief of the World," the fox. —R. S.

